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NO one questions the significance of the conversations with the German Chancellor and his Foreign Minister at Chequers. Their importance will not be lessened by their informality. Financially, Germany, like the rest of Europe, is in a bad way. Her burdens, aggravated by reparations, are almost more than she can bear. Her grievances are genuine grievances, which, in spite of the provocation of the Hitlerites and the Stahlhelm, we should be mad to ignore. Dr. Brüning will, naturally and rightly, take advantage of his visit to put the German case as strongly as he can. In all likelihood he will suggest a moratorium or, failing that, a new conference to discuss a revision of the Young Plan. His own fate as Chancellor depends upon the answer which he receives from his English hosts. We may be sure that the answer will be sympathetic, but if Germany and Europe are to be saved from chaos something more than vague sympathy will have to come out of the Chequers visit. To-day we have reached a stage in international problems when postponement has no longer the merits of expediency. If the German demand for a moratorium should be the first step towards a revision of war debts, we should be the last nation to turn our backs on the proposal. It would ultimately be of as much advantage to ourselves as to the rest of the world.

The smouldering quarrel between Fascism and the Church in Italy burst into flame last week with the orders for the suppression of the clubs affiliated to the Azione Cattolica. But since then the Pope and Signor Mussolini have each made some conciliatory gestures, and it looks as if a compromise may be arrived at which will save the faces of both parties. We doubt, however, whether there will be lasting peace. Fundamental principles are involved, and there is deep-rooted hostility on the Fascists' side. Their ranks are full of anti-clericals—ex-Liberals, ex-Socialists, ex-Freemasons—who only accepted the Latvian Treaty and the Concordat in 1929 with great reluctance. Mussolini himself was once a violent atheist, and nobody supposes that his support of the Church was dictated by religious motives. The Fascists now consider—and they appear to have good grounds for their view—that the Church is violating the Concordat. The Azione Cattolica, they say, has taken on a definitely political character, which is non-Fascist and even anti-Fascist, and the principles of Fascism, of course, will permit no such organisation in the State. * * *

Outsiders, who have no love for the principles of Fascismo, would feel more sympathy for the Vatican if it had behaved better to the Christian Democrats—the Popular Party led by the priest Don Sturzo—and had been less eager a couple of years ago to make unto itself friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness. Anyhow, if the Azione Cattolica is allowed to go on, we may be sure that it will have its wings clipped.

Mussolini does not envisage two kings in Brentford! On the other hand, a complete rupture with the Pope can hardly suit his book. That might please the anti-clericals, but it would weaken his position with another section of his following. To all outward seeming the regime is firm enough, but there is plenty of discontent, economic and political, below the surface, as the Duce is well aware. It is kept below the surface by force and fear. An army of spies and informers, the penal islands, farcical trials and savage sentences on suspects, with an occasional assault like that committed the other day on Arturo Toscanini, who refused to turn a classical concert into a glorification of Fascism—all these play their part in the system. But the system is a good deal easier to apply if the Church is on its side. A war against the cassock would have consequences as disagreeable for the dictator as for the Vatican.

* * *

The results of the elections to the Egyptian Parliament show an overwhelming majority for the Government. In a Chamber of 150 the Prime Minister's party, the Shaabists, holds 81 seats, and the King's Party, the Ittihadists, 38. The Wafd and the Liberals, of course, are unrepresented, since they boycotted the elections. Opinions may differ about the wisdom of this boycott, but there can be no doubt about the right of the popular parties to be indignant at the changes in the constitution and the electoral law that were made by Sidky Pasha. It is ludicrous to say, as Sidky says, that the result proves the country's confidence in the regime. It merely proves that he is a bold and clever politician, who has temporarily scored off his opponents—and the Egyptian people—by the use of the force and the arts he was in a position to employ. What Sidky and King Fuad will do, now that they have got their *chambre introuvable*, or what the Wafdists and the Liberals will do, we do not know. So far as a settlement of Anglo-Egyptian relations is concerned, the position is extremely awkward. The British Government declared last year that they were ready to reopen negotiations for a Treaty with "an Egyptian Government commanding a majority in a freely elected Egyptian Parliament." Sidky Pasha's Government does not come within that definition.

* * *

The main feature of the Rumanian elections has been not so much the victory of the Government—in the prevailing circumstances and with a man like M. Argetoianu to load the dice that was to be expected—as the crushing defeat of the Maniu Party. Even after every allowance is made for the methods employed by the controlling authorities—the intimidation and, where intimidation failed, the suppression of voting papers—the eclipse of the National Peasant Party is astonishing. The loss of nearly three hundred seats is not to be explained entirely by "faked" electioneering. Rumania has suffered more than most European countries from the economic depression, and the failure of the Maniu Party to alleviate the existing distress has reacted against it even in its natural strongholds.

* * *

Less than fifty per cent. of the voters went to the poll, and the abstentions cannot be altogether accounted for by intimidation. Apathy and disillusionment also played their part. The victory of the Government endows King Carol and the impetuous Mr. Argetoianu with semi-dictatorial powers. It will enable the King to expel his long-suffering consort. It does not strengthen his powers any more than it increases his prestige. If world economic conditions improve, if by a turn of the wheel of fortune Rumania should benefit by this improvement, King Carol may acquire a facile popularity. If, as seems more likely, the process of recovery should be slow, he will be lucky if he escapes as lightly as Don Alfonso.

* * *

The Budget presented by the Canadian Premier has at least the merit of candour, and in the most thorough-going fashion it carries forward the policy of "Canada First." Mr. Bennett had to admit a deficit of 16 millions sterling, and to prepare for one of 21 millions. He announced tariff charges on no fewer than 200 articles, affecting almost one-half of Canada's import trade. The United States is hit all round, especially by a merciless increase in the duty on dairy produce and motor-cars, by a complete embargo on used cars, and a heavy duty on anthracite coal. Canada has no anthracite, which is a primary necessity in a country dependent on central heating, and she will take none from Soviet Russia. Steel products, leather goods and linen are among the many British manufactures affected by the new tariff, which, by the by, comes as a startling retort to Mr. Baldwin's assertion at Welbeck that the Dominions are to provide the only open markets for British goods. The Premier stated that Canada must accept responsibility for the abrogation of the trade agreement with New Zealand. Obviously, since Mr. Bennett fought the election last year mainly on the menace of New Zealand butter.

* * *

The discussions at Geneva on the coal problem are going none too well. It is true that a two-thirds majority has been obtained in committee for a maximum working shift of seven and three-quarter hours from bunk to bunk. But the two-thirds majority was barely secured; and there are still serious complications about the amount of permissible overtime and other matters to be overcome. It may be harder to get a two-thirds majority for the Convention as a whole than to secure two-thirds majority in committee for a single clause. Even if the Convention is passed, ratification by all the countries concerned may not be easily secured, and is bound to take a considerable time. For the moment, the Geneva discussions are suspended; Mr. Shinwell and his colleagues have come back to England to deal with the immediate question of miners' hours and wages at home. It looks now as if agreement will be reached to allow the present hours to continue for a further period, if the owners are prepared to make satisfactory concessions about wages. This would involve legislation; but it does not appear that the Government is at all anxious to introduce into any Bill that may be brought forward the minimum wage clause demanded by the miners. The Miners' Federation, however, will certainly press for this unless the owners are ready to concede a good deal on a voluntary basis.

Next week the House of Commons will go into Committee on the Finance Bill. Mr. Graham will be in general charge of the Government benches, aided by that formidable instrument, the guillotine. Its use in connection with a Finance Bill is unfortunate, but, where the measure is as contentious as is the present one, it is inevitable. Even so, Mr. Graham will not have an easy task. The Conservative Party will be solidly against the Land Value tax, and criticism, from a somewhat different angle, is tending to harden among Radicals. A large number of amendments from members who have no sympathy at all with the standpoint of the Die-hard opposition are already on the order paper. They are anxious that the Bill should effectively secure to the community some share in the "unearned increment" accruing from land monopoly. But they want to see its provisions properly co-ordinated with those of the Town and Country Planning Bill. As things stand, the tax promotes congestion and "ribboning," and is socially, if not fiscally, unsound.

* * *

The dockers have won the first round of their battle with the port employers by getting the demands for wage-reductions temporarily withdrawn, in order to allow time for a full and unprejudiced discussion of the conditions of the industry. Mr. Ernest Bevin, in opposing the employers' demands, made an outspoken attack on the current doctrine that wages ought to be reduced, urging that costs could be cut down in other ways (as they are actually being cut in a number of ports) and that the reduction in the home market from reduced wages was unlikely to be made good by the expansion of employment in the export trades. While the employers have temporarily withdrawn their claims, this does not mean that the dispute is at an end, but only that a crisis is postponed for the present. It does, however, show that the employers, or a majority of them, are not yet prepared to press their demands to the point of a national stoppage, in preference to trying to secure modified concessions by means of further negotiation. The dockers, for their part, have not refused to consider any modifications in the conditions of work. At present, a large proportion of the port charges paid by shipowners goes, not in wages, but in various small middlemen's charges. An attempt to cut costs without reducing wages by eliminating some of these charges seems the most hopeful way of avoiding a conflict.

* * *

"How long is this farce to be allowed to go on?" a Conservative M.P. asked the other day when Mr. William Graham was expounding the Government's policy for dealing with the cotton trade. We echo the question. The Lancashire cotton trade, through its Joint Committee, is engaged in taking a voluntary census of production and productive capacity, in the hope of working out, on the basis of ascertained facts, a scheme for eliminating surplus capacity and regulating future output and sales. In fact, the industry is being given yet another chance—the umpteenth—of reforming itself from within. We are told that now at last the industry has learnt its lesson, and does mean business; but we have been told this so many times before that we are not much impressed. Moreover, it seems evident that, even if a scheme is prepared voluntarily, compulsory powers will be needed to carry it into effect. Why not take the compulsory powers at once, even if they are not used until the industry has seen what it can do voluntarily? It would do a good deal more for itself if it were certain that compulsory action would be taken in default of its dealing with its own problems. Mr. Graham replied with some heat that the voluntary action now being taken was by no means a farce. We wish we were able to agree with him.

* * *

The New Party, of which we have not heard much since the Ashton by-election, has now opened a series of week-end schools for the purpose of educating its prospective candidates and speakers in the policy for which they are expected to stand. It also proposes to launch a weekly paper in the autumn, and to set out upon an intensive propaganda campaign. The Mosleyites appear to have plenty of money, and quite a number of potential speakers and candidates. They lack two things—a rank and file and a consistent policy. Will any number of week-end schools really supply the latter need? Their campaign appears to have been based so far on quite irreconcilable appeals. They are trying to be at once more Left Wing than the Labour Party and more Right Wing, in that they want to push the issue of Socialism into the background and concentrate on an immediate economic programme. Their followers include disgruntled Socialists of the Left, and disgruntled Nationalists and Conservatives of the Right. It is true enough that these are the same elements as composed the parties of Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler. But are the conditions such as to make Fascism in any form a practicable policy in Great Britain? We do not think they are; but, short of some form of Fascism, we do not see any considerable future for the Mosleyites.

* * *

The case of Mrs. Wise, still fresh in our readers' memories, has already borne fruit in legislation. Miss Picton-Turberville's Bill, which places a pregnant woman outside the scope of the death penalty, received its third reading on Tuesday. From one point of view, the Bill is not important, since it is inconceivable that, under such circumstances as those of Mrs. Wise, the penalty should in fact be exacted. But, in another sense, it marks a real advance—the beginning of a realisation that crime is not unrelated to disease. The case against hanging a pregnant woman rests partly on the fact that she is likely to be pathologically abnormal. But many murderers are pathologically abnormal; yet the law, which assumes a mediæval nescience in the matter of human behaviour, is blissfully innocent of the fact. A comprehensive and continuing review of crime and punishment, in the light of up-to-date medical knowledge, is very much overdue.

* * *

This year's Derby was one of the "best ever." The sun shone gloriously, the King was at Epsom for his birthday, the course was besieged by "record" crowds, and—best of all—the favourite came in first. To triumph over both the climate and the bookmakers is to bring off a very popular "double." Nevertheless, the real seat of interest is, of course, no longer Epsom but Dublin. Thousands of cheques for the lucky winners in the greatest gamble so far staged are now being feverishly prepared. What is the next move? Mr. Clynes is contemplating, on the one hand, a more stringent enforcement of the law, on the other, the appointment of a Select Committee. The web of futility and cynicism in which he finds himself enmeshed makes his job a most unenviable one. Mr. MacDonald, meanwhile, sees civilisation rocking to its doom; while the hospitals are proclaiming in advance their fear of the Greek (or, rather, Irish) gifts with which they may presently be seduced. In one respect at least we are better off than America with her Prohibition—we have not got an 18th Amendment round our necks.

WILL SPAIN GO BOLSHEVIK?

BEHIND all the excitement about Spain, all the pleasant and peaceful rejoicing in a democratic triumph and the end of a bad old system and the dethronement of a king whom everyone had learned to distrust, there is one insistent question: What is to follow? When the elections are over what is coming—coming, perhaps from the Right, but more probably from the Left? Will the present bourgeois Liberal-Socialist regime prove more durable than similar regimes have proved in other countries? Is there any real basis for the comparison, so often drawn since the declaration of a republic, between the present Spanish Government and the Kerensky one in Russia? The innumerable differences between Spain in 1931 and Russia in 1917 are obvious. The question is whether there are any essential similarities.

The broad reason why Liberal Governments which take the place of discredited autocracies so often fail to maintain themselves is simple enough. The proceedings begin, as they have done in Spain, with a happy and bloodless carnival. It was so in the first months of the French Revolution; it was so in 1848 and in the spring of 1917 in Russia. As long as the fundamental issue of property is avoided, the working and middle-class unite to acclaim the reign of liberty, free speech and constitutional government. In the case of Spain, Alfonso's refusal to rule constitutionally, his cynical disregard of his Coronation oath, the massacre of Spanish troops, caused by his incompetent interference with the plans of his generals in Morocco, the daily acts of petty tyranny which steadily accumulated feeling against him during the last year—all these made a basis on which his adversaries could form a popular Government. The more liberal Catholics were reassured by the fact that the head of the Government, Señor Zamora, was a devout Catholic, while the workers were pleased by the inclusion of well-known Socialists like Los Rios and Prieto, and of a genuine and respected Labour leader like Caballero.

So far so good. But power brings difficulties. The new Ministers were men of the highest character and best intentions, unusually disinterested and able men, who had been willing to suffer for their convictions and who were, man for man, altogether superior to the usual run of professional politician. Some of their promises they could begin to fulfil at once. Economy and pacifism were both satisfied by a drastic scheme for the reduction of the Army. Similarly, an ambitious scheme of agrarian reform could be announced. But while embarking on a programme of this kind the Government at once encountered the problem of keeping order and at the same time maintaining the popular liberties which they had promised. The rule of law was easier to uphold from a prison cell during the dictatorship than when running a revolutionary administration. As a provisional Government, the Ministers often found themselves without legal status. They had denounced all forms of censorship, but have not succeeded in office in giving full licence to the press. The suppression of *El Debate* over the telephone without reason given was no less dictatorial because soon abandoned, while the prolonged suppression of the *A.B.C.* has shocked even warm supporters of the Government.

Again, take the question of the peseta. Above all, the Government is anxious to prevent its collapse. It had no thought of following the example of those countries who have got rid of their internal debts by devaluating their currency. But it is not united enough, nor sufficiently confident without a Parliament at its back, to carry out a continuous and effective economic policy. The measures which it has so far taken to save the peseta have been designed to encourage middle-class people to believe that the Government is doing something energetic. But personal search at the frontier and ministerial edicts, such as that which threatens with imprisonment traders who do not immediately cash their foreign cheques, seem calculated to create the panic which Ministers are most anxious to avoid. Frontiers cannot be kept as impregnable barriers without far more drastic treatment than a Liberal Government can possibly afford to carry out, and many people who would not have thought of selling pesetas may begin to look for ways of surmounting ineffective restrictions. Rich people are said to be buying expensive jewellery, which they take out as their personal effects, having arranged to resell the jewels, minus a commission, to a foreign branch of the same firm on the other side of the frontier. How many times have the members of the present Government denounced the dictatorship for similar petty interferences? Perhaps there is a kind of infection which Governments catch from each other when they come to sit in the chairs of their predecessors.

Meanwhile the two great problems—Socialism and the relationship of Church and State—have been indefinitely shelved. So far, the Government only deals with them as problems of public order. While the bulk of the population is Catholic, hatred of the Orders, especially of the Jesuits, is ancient and bitter. The anti-clerical demonstrations in the last few weeks in Spain have been mild in comparison with the destruction carried out in Barcelona twenty years ago. Only seven convent churches have actually been destroyed in Madrid out of a total of 160. But the burnings were not creditable to the Government. In its desire to avoid any possible conflict between the Civil Guard and the people, it permitted small gangs of young men and women—organised no one knows by whom—to burn down churches and schools, when a mere handful of police could have dispersed them. Huge crowds of citizens stood by and watched with a curiously impartial tolerance. The Government's desire to avoid any conflict with the people was, of course, both morally and tactically sound; but the Civil Guard has since found it necessary to fire on the fishermen strikers at San Sebastian, and the organised workers believe that they are not likely to be treated with the same tolerance as the gangs of hooligans intent on arson. The Army itself is a doubtful factor, but it probably contains many Red sympathisers, and the Navy, small as it is, is reputed to be tainted with Bolshevism.

The Catalonian problem is quiet for the moment, but only for the moment. A curious dispute is in progress. The Government declares that the Catalonians have

accepted a federal constitution. The document itself has never been published, and Colonel Macia, the veteran leader of the Separatists, asserts that he has only promised to hold his hand until the Cortes meet. He makes no bones about it. If the Catalonians are then given what they want, all will be well. If the Cortes refuse their terms, he threatens to declare war.

Only a strong united Government could tackle these problems, and the present administration is hopelessly divided about Socialism, about religion, and about everything except Republicanism. Several of its best-known members have expressed a desire to resign, but have been persuaded not to by the Premier on the ground that there is no Head of the State to whom resignation may be made. The Ministers have therefore contented themselves with passing a self-denying ordinance declaring that they will publish no more edicts. They will put aside any thoughts of a positive policy until they see what the elections bring forth. For the moment they will concentrate on keeping order and asking for a future mandate. The Cortes, when they do meet, will certainly be Republican, but how far to the Left the centre of gravity will lie no one knows, and on that the immediate future must depend. In any case the next Government will not be able to rely merely on remaining as liberal, tolerant and decent as circumstances permit. It will have to make up its mind whether it will side on the issue of property with the middle or with the working class.

Of course, these difficulties may be surmounted, and it will be said, truly enough, that none of them provides any probability, let alone proof, that the Bolshevism which some have prophesied for Spain will triumph there. Much depends on the peseta. If it crashes—and given a strong Government after the elections there seems no good reason why it should—a really dangerous situation will arise. The Bolsheviks hope that it would be what they describe as " an immediately revolutionary situation." Some of the elements they expect are already present. An ignorant peasantry, some of them land hungry; an industrial and indefinitely " Red " population in Barcelona, and also in Bilbao and in the South; a small middle class which has no great confidence in itself and which has lost its belief in the certainties of the old regime—these are present in Spain, as they were in Russia. The doubtful factors, apart from the question of financial stability, are whether Separatism will swamp Bolshevism in Catalonia—and a Communist revolution seems impossible except from Barcelona—and whether there is in Spain that small nucleus of organised Communists which alone could establish " a dictatorship of the proletariat." This last factor is as speculative as the peseta. That the workers are quite unlikely to be satisfied by a middle-class revolution; that the historical syndicalism of Spain could be easily utilised for Bolshevik purposes; and that propaganda from Moscow is being actively carried on amongst them—all this is clear. But as one reads the history of the one successful Bolshevik revolution, one realises that it would scarcely have succeeded without the genius of Lenin, and, as far as we know to-day, there is no Spanish Lenin.

SHOULD WE NATIONALISE THE RAILWAYS?

THE Weir Report on the electrification of the main line railways has brought the question of nationalisation once more into the foreground of practical politics. There is, indeed, on the face of the matter, no connection between the two things, and the Report itself does not raise or discuss the question of public ownership. But in fact the two are closely bound up together; and it seems certain that, if electrification is to be carried out, socialisation is in some form inevitable.

The chief reason for this is to be found in the amount of capital expenditure involved in electrification. The Weir Report puts the net amount of new capital that will be needed at £261,000,000, and this does not include the £80,000,000 that will have to be spent by the Central Electricity Board in order to equip the electrical industry with the plant and capacity for supplying a fully electrified railway service. Moreover, the net sum makes allowance for the big saving in maintenance and renewals of the existing railway system, over the period of twenty years which the complete change-over to the new methods is estimated to take. The gross capital expenditure is put at £328,000,000 or, including the necessary expenditure of the Electricity Board, at over £400,000,000.

Now, the railways under their present ownership and in the absence of a full State guarantee of interest for a long period of years would have no chance at all of raising anything like these sums in the capital market. They could not raise the whole sum needed on any terms; and even for a much smaller sum the investing public would make them pay at a very high rate. The State could, of course, guarantee the interest while leaving the railways in private hands; but it is almost inconceivable that it should do so. For this would mean that the State would have to give the railways the right to be as inefficient as they chose at the taxpayers' direct expense. If the State were to assume the responsibility for the interest, socialisation of the railway service, in some form, would be inevitable.

It has commonly been urged in the past that general electrification of the entire railway system is so costly a business that we should do best to begin with piecemeal experiments here and there. As far as dense suburban traffic is concerned, such experiments are being made, and will certainly be extended; but unfortunately suburban experience sheds little light on the problem of main-line electrification. The Weir Committee has, we fear, conclusively disposed of the idea that we can with profit electrify an experimental section of one of our main-line railways; for the figures prepared by its experts show that the system of dual working, which any partial electrification would necessarily involve, would be far more expensive than complete working by either system. This demonstration seems conclusive, and it means that, if we are to embark upon electrification at all, we shall have to go the entire way.

In face of the Committee's figures, the railways are hardly likely to be electrified in the near future, even though the present situation in respect of prices and unemployment is, on the whole, exceptionally favourable to the plan. We do not want to be dogmatic on this point, and we still hope that general electrification may be proved to be a practicable and economically sound proposition. But, for the near future, the project seems too large and too doubtful to stand a good chance of adoption.

If the railways are electrified, nationalisation will surely be inevitable. But what if they are not? How then does the case stand? Our readers will remember that the Labour representatives on the National Railway Wages Board, in

agreeing to the recent cuts in wages, added a rider in favour of railway nationalisation, and that discussions on the question have since taken place between the Prime Minister and the railway Trade Unions. Evidently, then, nationalisation is being seriously considered by the Government.

It may be said that, in effect, the railways are half-nationalised already. The rates which they are allowed to charge are subject to public control; the wages they have to pay are, in practice, governed by the decisions of a tribunal set up by Act of Parliament; and the return to the shareholders is partly regulated by the State through the provision in the Railways Act of 1921, which instructs the Rates Tribunal to fix charges at a level allowing the railways to earn, if the traffic will permit, the net revenue earned in 1913, *plus* allowances for new capital expenditure since that date. Moreover, the railways rank as public utility concerns for the receipt of State advances in aid of capital schemes for the provision of employment, and their recent capital extensions have in fact been carried out largely with the aid of public money. What more than this could be achieved by complete nationalisation?

First of all, evidently, the unification of the four separate railways into a single national system, under a common control of policy. But is this really desirable? Are not the existing railways too large, or at least quite large enough, from the standpoint of efficient management and control? Even a nationalised railway system would probably need to be split up into a number of separate units for purposes of effective control, with a large amount of autonomy for each unit. It would no doubt be possible, by some rearrangement and exchange of lines, to get more manageable units than those now in force, and perhaps a quite different system of division might be adopted. But division, in some form, there would have to be, in order to avoid top-heaviness in the whole organisation.

Under this head, then, the case for nationalisation rests rather on the need for thorough regrouping and closer co-ordination of policy than on the need for unification pure and simple. Yet it remains quite a strong case; for there is not much logic about the existing groups, and there is still a fair amount of failure to co-ordinate services that might be remedied with advantage.

The financial question is more difficult. If the railway shareholders were simply bought out, or given State bonds in exchange for their shares, the effect would be to substitute a fixed interest charge, payable by the State, for the present fluctuating railway dividend. Presumably, State purchase, if it were made, would be at market price, as determined by current Stock Exchange quotations. But if the railways are, from the standpoint of revenue, a wasting asset, this might well mean that the State would be paying too much; for it would be assuming a perpetual burden, whereas stock market quotations represent dividend prospects and estimates of capital value in the near future. On the other hand, if the railways cease to pay, it is impossible to doubt that the State will have to take them over, and reasonable to suggest that it had better do this at once, in order to secure whatever economies and improvements can be realised by regrouping and co-ordination of transport services. But even if this is so, the State must evidently beware of paying the shareholders more than their property is really worth.

An alternative to State purchase, in the ordinary sense, would be to make the railways public property, giving the existing shareholders not ordinary Government debt, but instead a claim valid only against the net earnings, or surplus, of the socialised undertaking. This proposal, being novel, would doubtless meet with strong criticism, but it would be, from the standpoint of the State, by far the easiest. It would neither involve the raising of new loans to buy old capital, nor burden the State with an interest obligation that railway revenues might be inadequate to meet. Nor would it be, in our view, unjust to the shareholders, who would have at least as good a chance of getting dividends under the new conditions as they have at present.

This view, of course, implies that the railways under socialisation would be managed with reasonable efficiency. Surely no one would propose that they should be run by an ordinary Civil Service department, with a Minister as their executive head. But there are widely divergent views about the right form of management under the State. One school of thought favours a Board or Commission of full-time experts, chosen for their personal qualities and not as representatives of any organised group or interest. This is, of course, the model adopted in the case of electricity and in Mr. Morrison's London Transport Bill. But there are, in the latter case, already strong under-currents of criticism from groups which would prefer a representative Board. The London ratepayers say that, as consumers, they ought to be represented, and the Trade Unions put in a plea for a share in the representation on grounds of workers' control. This issue is, indeed, of vital importance, for there are many who hold that representative control is of the essence of socialisation, and that, for example, Mr. Morrison's Bill is rather a handing over of London transport to private enterprise than socialisation in any real sense. With this point, as it applies to proposals for railway nationalisation, we propose to deal in a subsequent article.

INDIA'S NEW MILLIONS

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN INDIA.]

THE census returns are one of the many factors which incline the more thoughtful type of Indian to desire a speedy settlement of the political question. They certainly suggest economic difficulties far harder to solve than any which will confront the Round Table Conference this autumn. The complete returns will not be available for many months, but the preliminary estimates are generally reckoned to be accurate to one in 2,000, and are quite sufficient for drawing certain general conclusions. They show that the population of India has increased by about 36 millions in ten years, rising from under 320 to over 356 millions. There is also evidence to prove that it is the agricultural population which is growing, and that, in spite of much belief to the contrary, there is no large movement into the cities. The population of the thirty or forty largest towns shows an increase, but of very little more than the ten per cent. which is the average of the country as a whole. It is probable that the proportion of Indians living in villages of under 5,000 inhabitants will remain, as it has done for the last forty years, at about 90 per cent. of the total. The large cities are still chiefly looked upon as temporary quarters round industrial undertakings, the previous Bombay census showing that less than one in six of the people had been born in the city. Agricultural India is thus producing each year a surplus population of about three to four millions, and at the present rate it will add to itself every twenty years a population considerably larger than modern Germany.

The last census figures suggest that the normal rate of increase is about one per cent. yearly, and there is no reason to believe that this will not be maintained. Apart from changes in social habits the factor most likely to restrict population is an epidemic. Famines were once the deciding influence, but owing to improved transport and better organisation there is little difficulty in getting enough food distributed for humans. There was probably little loss of life

during the partial famine of 1919-1920, but the influenza scourge of 1918-19 swept off millions. Famines in the past, or an epidemic, have dropped the rate as low as a tenth of one per cent., as from 1891-1901, or 1911-1921, but apart from catastrophes, the normal rate would seem to be one per cent. It reached this in 1881-1891, approached it in 1901-1911, and has slightly exceeded it during the last ten years. There are few signs of social changes likely to make much difference for some years. A small Europeanised class is adopting the habit of later marriages for their daughters, and possibly of birth control. There is some voluntary restriction in certain areas where pressure on the land is very severe, but no evidence of any rapid alteration in marital habits. It is more than probable that any slight drop in the birth rate due to later marriages will be more than counter-balanced by a reduction in infant mortality, due to the many official and unofficial efforts now being made to introduce better obstetric methods. The present death rate for infants is about one in four, and a reduction to the Ceylon rate of 189 per thousand, which is far higher than that of any European country, would add another million or so yearly to the population.

At present it is only the more independent-minded Indians who take the population question at all seriously. Nearly every Indian publicist and politician is a nationalist. For many years they have been arguing that India's poverty is merely the result of bad government, and that her rate of increase is unnaturally slow and due to the same cause. The comparatively small rise between 1911 and 1921 was very frequently used as a propagandist point against the British. The natural corollary is that a few years of self-government will restore India's prosperity regardless of the size of her population, and there is even a feeling that the more Indians there are, the higher will be their standing in the world, a curious argument which would make a Dane feel very small whenever he met a Chinaman. It is, therefore, unpopular for an Indian to suggest in public that the new millions constantly being added to their country are going to make it harder and harder to raise the standard of living. It is only in private, and amongst those who are not entirely obsessed by politics, that one finds some appreciation of future difficulties, and of the probability of agrarian troubles in the near future.

Looking at the problem merely from the economic standpoint it is very difficult to see what is to happen to these surplus three millions a year which are being produced in India's half million villages. They cannot emigrate, for no other country wants them except as indentured labourers, and this system has been practically abolished. There are fewer Indians abroad now than twenty years ago, and of the million or two who are still out of the country nearly all are in Ceylon or Malay. There is not likely to be any increase in the small trading communities in East and South Africa, and no country with any large waste spaces shows the least sign of welcoming Indian immigration. Indian politicians often ascribe this to their present status, but there is no evidence that even an independent India would be able to force her inhabitants into parts where they are not now received as settlers.

Migration to the towns is another solution, which is certainly the most popular amongst the Indian upper classes. They assume, on very little evidence, that India would normally have developed like European countries, and have thirty or forty per cent. of its population in towns and industrial centres. It is often said that a few years of "sympathetic" government, by which is meant a policy of prohibitory tariffs and bounties from public funds, will turn India into an industrial country. Actually India is already a Protectionist country, and pays extremely high bounties to such young industries as Tata's Steel Works. There is no reason to believe that a Federal Government, which will contain representatives from the States and the agricultural districts, is going to do exactly what the mill-owners want. Probably tariffs will be raised experimentally, but Indian industry, which increased five-fold between 1891 and 1921, is not likely to develop very much faster than at present, when it takes each year about another 40,000 men and women into the factories. It would have to increase at forty times its present rate, adding each year industries equal to all its present factories, in order to absorb half-yearly surplus from the villages. Nearly everything which is said or written on this subject by Indians shows a complete lack of any sense of proportion. Indian industry may develop with great rapidity under a responsible Federal Government, but it has no right to do so at the expense of the villager, for no industrial development is going to relieve substantially the pressure on the soil.

It would seem that the hard-worked land of India has got, somehow or other, to support very much the same proportion of population as it has done in the past. Other village industries still survive, but they do not increase, for they suffer, as in other countries, from the competition of large scale industry. It is agriculture and agriculture alone which has had to absorb the 85 millions who have been added to the population in the last fifty years, and which will have to provide some kind of a livelihood for an extra three or four million each year. Now the total amount of cultivable land is under 300 million acres, and much of this is extremely poor. During the next ten to fifteen years another twenty to thirty million acres will be added by the new irrigation schemes in Sind, the Punjab, and elsewhere. The difficulty of finding any other land was well illustrated at the end of the war, when the Government had to redeem its promise to settle Indians who came back from the war. In most districts it was almost impossible to find any suitable land, and the situation was only saved by some of the new canal colonies in the Punjab. Nor are there many other areas suitable for irrigation after the present schemes are completed. Unless there is a considerable rise in wheat prices the latter look like being financial liabilities. It is already being found impossible to collect "water rates" in the Punjab colonies, and other schemes would be far less economic. One may take 330 millions as about the total amount of land which will ultimately be available, and a million acres a year as the fastest rate at which new land can be brought under irrigation. There is little doubt that when the British first came to India there were two or three acres of cultivable land for every man, woman and child dependent on farm work. Fifty years ago the amount was less than one and a half, to-day it is about one, and if the storks remain as busy as they have been lately there will only be about three-quarters of an acre in twenty years' time.

These figures may not mean very much to anyone who has not been closely connected with agriculture. The townsman is apt to think that pressure on the land may be met by adopting the "more intensive methods of cultivation" which every politician describes so glibly. In India too many people on the land is sheer tragedy, and a tragedy which will have its repercussions upon Western civilisation. The land is the only source from which the ryot or peasant can get any cash. The European smallholder can get some cash from his cows, his pigs, or his poultry. His land is a convenience for keeping stock, or for growing vegetables for his family. He may grow fruit or vegetables for the the market, but he does not expect to make his cash profits out of growing ordinary cereal crops. The ryot is prevented by religion, climate, and the absence of markets from undertaking the stock-keeping and market-gardening upon which

the European peasant depends. The Indian idea is to grow some cereals, keep some for his own needs, and sell the small surplus. His cattle just provide milk and "ghee" for the village. The only cash is from the surplus crop, and the amount of the surplus depends on the number of mouths to be filled, and the area sown. It may, of course, be possible to increase production per acre without any new expense, but all the efforts of experts and agricultural commissions have done very little to help the ryot over his greatest difficulty. It is too often forgotten that nearly all modern farming methods are based on the idea of saving labour. As the Indian peasant's work only takes him three or four months out of the year such "improvements" are valueless. Most people who have studied this question have now come to the conclusion that the only hope lies in a complete reorganisation of village life, and the introduction of new feeding habits, methods of stock-keeping, etc., while the State will have to play a considerable part in the marketing of the peasants' tiny surplus.

It is possible to be optimistic about India's immediate future, but it is difficult to see how the great bulk of its people are to avoid growing poorer and poorer, tied, as they are, to a limited area of land, and with a population growing so rapidly. Such people, whether they stay in the villages or move into the towns, will be a continual threat to the standard of living in other countries.

Delhi, May 18th.

CHANCE

THERE are, it must be confessed, comparatively few things on which to congratulate ourselves in the present state of the human race. Depressing clouds hang persistently above the horizon. Problems, instead of coming nearer solution, seem to recede further from it every day. The international situation is dangerous. The national situation gives cause for anxiety. Cynicism is growing, faith declining. An eminent dean assures us that it will be all right in a thousand years, but a thousand years is a long time to wait. It is little wonder that many people, in contemplating the future, see no escape from despair but in indifference.

Yet during the past week one ray of sunshine has broken through the gloom, and made it possible to believe that the human race is not just yet going to resign itself either to indifference or to despair. With the Irish Sweepstake a wave of hope swept over the civilised world. During the past week it has spent itself, and several millions of people have lost not only their money but their prospects of making a fortune. Yet, instead of repining, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of them have taken their losses with a smiling countenance, and have squared their jaws in a firm determination to win a prize in the next sweep. You cannot defeat a people of so dauntless a courage as this. Here, at least, is one field on which men fall to rise again, are baffled to fight better. If the human race were half as hopeful about the League of Nations as it is about the great sweepstakes, we should be able to settle down into a perpetual summer of peace.

A number of moralists, though not all, condemn lotteries and refuse to see anything noble in the passion of the ordinary gambler. They judge gambling as some atheists judge religion, by its excesses, and denounce the innocent because of the peccant minority. They invent specious arguments to support their case, such as that it is wrong to hope to get something for nothing, as though even good men had not done this since the beginning of the world. Who is there who would not like to be left a fortune? Who is there who does not wish that his shares would rise in value without any effort on his part? To buy a ticket in a sweepstake is merely to buy a chance of obtaining what everybody wants, and, incidentally, to help other people to obtain it. There is, indeed, no finer model of unselfishness than the betting man and the purchaser of sweepstake tickets. For generations, the betting men of England have been clothing the wives and children of the bookmakers. It may be said that this is not the object of betting; yet every intelligent man who bets knows that it is its result. Our fathers and grandfathers have told us that we cannot make money by betting, and we know from experience that our fathers and grandfathers were right. To make money on horseracing is for the ordinary man more difficult than to make money in any trade or profession. This is a fact so generally understood that, apart from a few persons, no man out of his teens can bet on horses without knowing that he is much more likely to enrich a bookmaker than to enrich himself. Yet the human race continues to bet and bookmakers to flourish. In such a world altruism cannot be said to be dead.

As regards the Irish Sweepstake, who can doubt the altruism of those who purchase tickets in it? We are reproached in letters to the Editor of the *Times* for our hypocrisy in pretending that we purchase these tickets in order to help the hospitals, and, no doubt, we have other motives as well. But we do at least happen incidentally to benefit the hospitals. If we do these excellent institutions a good turn, why inquire microscopically into our motives? How pleasant it is to know that, while enjoying oneself, one is not only doing nobody else any harm but is actually, even if unintentionally, doing one's fellow-creatures good! And, while helping the hospitals, we are also making thousands of other people happy by providing them with prizes ranging from £25 to £30,000. This, it must be said, is a wonderful consolation to those of us who always fail to draw a prize in a sweepstake. Who of us can read without the light of joy in his eyes stories of dustmen and dethroned kings grown suddenly rich? Which of us grudged his ten shillings to the Italian ice-cream merchant who found himself at once the favourite and the victim of fortune? It is said that we envy the prize-winners, and we do; but there is no malice in our envy. And, anyhow, we have helped to make them happy.

We have also, it should be said, succeeded in making ourselves happy, though we should have been still happier if we had won a fortune. Still, the next best thing to a fortune is the chance of a fortune, and we possessed that for several weeks. Some of us possessed it hopefully, some of us philosophically. A great poet told me that he was absolutely certain that he would win a prize; but great poets have powerful imaginations. My own imagination in respect to lotteries is weak. Even though a few days ago I opened a fortune-telling birthday-book and read under the date of my birthday the legend: "You will have a surprise about money," I could not feel absolutely confident that I would draw Cameronian in the sweep. I felt a little more confident than I should otherwise have done, but my feeling was nearer faint hope than certainty. A palmist told me many years ago that I should have to work for my living, and one cannot escape from one's doom. Still, there is always a chance—a remote chance—that fortune will change, and this chance I count well worth ten shillings. To purchase a ticket in a lottery, indeed, is to buy a kind of fiction in which oneself is the hero. It is to see oneself, in one's mind's eye, happy and rich, free from all the cares and anxieties involved in earning a living, able to buy a cottage in the country to take as long a holiday as one wishes, and so forth. It may not be the most heroic of ideals, but it is among the most inno-

cent. It is not avarice, for avarice is the love of money apart from what it will buy, and most of us, in our sweepstake dreams, mean to spend the money. Besides this, the desire for money won without labour does not exclude dreams of a nobler kind. It might even be maintained that anyone who longs to lead a noble life should wish to obtain money without labour so that he may be released from the material struggle for gain and be able to devote himself to loftier pursuits. I often think how much more time I should have had to become a better man if I had been born to a fortune. Getting and spending we lay waste our powers, says Wordsworth, and getting wastes even more of our powers than spending. Day after day, hour after hour, goes wastefully by in the effort to provide our families and ourselves with the necessaries of existence. This, it seems to me, is an extremely lamentable state of affairs. It turns most of us inevitably into materialists. Let one of us win a first prize in a sweepstake, however, and he will have time to sit down and read the philosophers. He may even have time to become a philosopher.

But I do not wish to over-emphasise the moral value of sweepstakes. I should be content to rest their claims on the addition they make to the general stock of harmless pleasure. The whole business has been described as a craze, but is there anything crazy in wanting to be rich? Is every one who succeeds in business to be looked on as a madman? Were all the great houses of England built by lunatics? If we are crazy in wishing to make our fortunes, we are crazy in good company. Samuel Smiles would surely not have looked askance at our dogged persistence in our efforts. One would gather from some of the denunciations of sweepstakes, however, that the ordinary human being, having bought a ticket, is able to think of nothing else till the draw is over. The milkman forgets to deliver the milk, the postman drops the letters into the wrong boxes, the clergyman preaches an unintelligible sermon, the barrister loses his case through not having studied his brief, the waitress brings poached eggs instead of fried—all because everybody has gone crazy with the dream of winning a fortune. It is a pretty picture, but somehow unlike life. Strange as it may seem, all of us went on with our work as usual. If our conversation and thoughts were trivial, they were no more trivial than before. We played a game, and it took less time than cricket—a game, it seems to me, far more becoming to a serious-minded man than bridge or even bézique. We played a game and we lost, and we do not care. We will try again the next time, if the police will let us.

I wish those who abuse lotteries would read Charles Lamb's essay on the subject, *The Illustrious Defunct*. Charles Lamb can scarcely be regarded as an apostle of the vices, and here he paints an entrancing picture of the Paradise—the Fools' Paradise if you like—that owes its existence to lotteries. He shows how, even under the bitterest disappointments the ticket-holder is a gainer by his dreams. He tells of a man who, in passing along Cheapside, saw the number 1069—the number of his own ticket—in the window of a lottery office. Elated by his triumph, he decided to walk round St. Paul's in order to consider how he should break the news to his family. After his walk round the cathedral, he returned to the shop and discovered that the number had been changed to 10,069, and, going inside, was told that a clerk had originally made a mistake. "This," says Lamb, "effectively calmed his agitation, but he always speaks of himself as having once possessed £20,000, and maintains that his ten minutes' walk round St. Paul's was worth ten times the purchase-money of his ticket." I doubt if I myself could have drawn good out of evil in this fashion, but even poor men to whom ten shillings is a sum that has to be saved up for have told me that they and their families, though not winning a prize, find a ticket in a sweepstake well worth the purchase-money. To be rich in our dreams is the only kind of riches most of us are ever likely to possess Who, without a twinge of conscience, could grudge toiling mortals this handful of fairy gold?

Y. Y.

FOOTWEAR

"And as I cobble with needle and thread,
I judge the world by the way they tread.
Heels worn thick and soles worn thin,
Toes turned out and toes turned in—
There's food for thought in a sandal skin."

"CHU CHIN CHOW."
(Cobbler's Song.)

ENGLISHWOMEN as a race undoubtedly possess the flattest and most misshapen feet in all Europe, with the possible exception of the Dutch. In attempting to hide this sad truth, the literary columns of the popular press periodically publish articles on the relative beauty of the ankles of our British girls compared with those of the traditional French *femme chic;* while the journals of broader interests sometimes refer rather patronisingly to the ever improving nether proportions of the Americans.

These patriotic effusions usually end with the same explanation, almost amounting to an apology. The Englishwoman is athletic; therefore she has a wholesome stride, from which it follows that her ankles should not be disproportionately slim and degenerate. The French are said to have absurdly short broad ones, on which they are obliged to mince, as if on stilts. The only mention made of female English feet is that they are shod in sensible walking shoes befitting the stride. The outward and visible sign of the efficacy of these same shoes is the series of multiple shops throughout the country selling contraptions of doubtful utility, whose advertised use is to convert a deformed foot into a normal walking organ. Women appear to be the chief customers.

In the opinion of those who do not or cannot wear them, high heels are the chief cause of many ills, including both flat feet and bunions. Strangely enough the latter are relatively uncommon in Paris, where heels of elegant shape and height are *de rigueur*. Similarly, they are less frequently seen among the younger generation of Englishwomen living in the towns, where shoes of French origin or design are easy to obtain and popular. If one should wish to feast one's eyes on a real orgy of flat feet and bunions one must go to the suburbs where live the middle-aged and respectable. Here can be seen feet of the queerest shapes imaginable. Bound Chinese feet must look beautiful by comparison. What, then, is the reason for these distortions and deformities? It is to the so-called sensible shoes we must turn to find the answer.

In order to understand why these shoes are so pernicious in their results it is necessary to know something of the mechanics of the foot and its movements in walking. The foot relies for its elasticity, mobility and strength on the presence of three bony arches. Of these, two run the length of the foot, one on the inside where it is best recognised as the instep; the other along the outer edge, much shallower than the former. The third is the most difficult to appreciate, since it lies just behind the ball of the foot; it is the shallowest of all and, therefore, the most easily flattened. On taking a step the weight is placed first on the heel, which constitutes the base of the rear pillars of both longitudinal arches. It is then continuously transmitted to the highest point or keystones of these two arches, which are composed of specially shaped bones slung and held together by several ligaments and tendons. As the ball of the foot and toes come in contact with the ground, the body weight is gradu-

ally transferred to the front pillars of these arches. At the same time the heel is raised from the ground. In natural bare foot walking, when the weight is placed on the heel, the muscles of the foot contract to heighten the arch in preparation for the weight which will presently be transmitted to it. The various minor joints, including those of the toes, have free play to accommodate themselves to the stress of the body weight and the strains of unequal walking surfaces; in this way the joints and muscles of the body become developed and capable of doing the work required of them. With the wearing of modern shoes with semi-rigid soles, extraneous solid heels and encasing uppers, such interplay of muscle and ligament is much reduced. The foot is effectively corseted, and is capable only of the minimum of internal movement. Since such is the case, it must follow that certain muscles and joints become weakened, and to some extent atrophied. It is obviously useless to argue that shoes should be abolished, but at least their form should be modified to fit the foot and to give extra support to those parts which take the maximum weight and in nature possess the maximum mobility.

To come back to the sensible woman's walking shoe. In order not to appear coquettish, it has a heel of almost perpendicular lines, set practically at right angles to the body of the shoe, of a height just sufficient to spoil the upward curvature from the heel to the instep, thus preventing the natural take-off from the ground. The instep of the shoe then slopes off shallowly to the sole, leaving a large hiatus between it and the instep of the foot. The result is that the part which requires the maximum of support under artificial conditions, is literally "badly let down," and strain, finally resulting in dropped arches, becomes almost inevitable. The one concession to smartness is the pointed toe achieved by slanting the inner edge of the sole. The inner edge of the natural human foot is straight and, since it has to accommodate itself into such a shoe, the big toe, which receives the maximum pressure, becomes pushed against the others. Bunions and hammer toes are the result.

Let us compare the French and American shoe with the one just described. They both possess the wicked high heel except on their walking shoes, where they imitate its shape, but make it shorter, or sometimes, in the case of the American, flat. The back of the heel slopes steeply down from the actual back of the shoe to the tip. The front surface curves upwards and forwards in a continuous line to the instep, thus accurately fitting the arch of the foot. The result of these elegant differences is that, although the heel is viciously high and upsets the true equilibrium of the foot and body, it does atone to a great extent by resting on the ground in such a way that a more natural and balanced kick-off can be obtained. The good work is continued by the arching instep which supports the corresponding part of the foot and prevents any sagging. Finally the inner edge of the sole is straight, and therefore allows the big toe to maintain its natural position in relation to the others. The American shoe possesses a further advantage. Although the product of a standardized country, it allows for infinite variety of broadness, narrowness and length; every size possesses innumerable subsizes so that any and every shape of foot can be comfortably shod. The reason men's shoes have not been considered here is that the heels are so low and the vamps so broad that they are as anatomically perfect as can be devised. Feminine diversity of shape is not required.

The reader deserves an apology for what seems perhaps a dull topic, but when he considers that this article is in the nature of the *dénouement* of a subject that, although not directly related to sex, has previously been taboo in the press, he may be consoled if not instructed. Since also the object is not the unoriginal plea for "back to nature at all costs," but the æsthetic improvement of an artificial though highly important instrument of progress, or rather progression, it may also serve to interest. We are told that an army marches on its stomach, but official communiqués published since the Great War show very painfully, but clearly, that it does so *via* its feet. Army recruits were astonished at the care and attention that was forced upon what they considered the least important part of their anatomy. Not so the veterans, nor even yet those who desired to be rid of the onerous duties of military life: flat feet for those whose tastes were peculiarly pacific became nearly as enviable a possession as epilepsy, but were much more difficult to simulate. We are told that what the Germans liked most about British corpses was their boots. Many lessons were learnt from the war; women, in particular, exercised themselves to maintain their state of freedom, outwardly manifested in their lighter and scantier clothing. In this direction, they have broken away from pre-war restrictions, except in the matter of their feet. Tradition has here proved almost second nature, and bunions have taken on a congenital aspect. Is it too much to ask the shoe manufacturers to discard their time-honoured lasts and look at feet as they are born, not made?

AUGUSTA BONNARD.

TO THE "LOST TRIBE" OF INDIGIRKA

A "lost tribe," who had seen no strangers for eighteen years and had never heard of the world war, have been discovered in the Arctic delta of Indigirka, Siberia.

LOST amidst snows eternal,
Remote, aloof, unstirred;
For whom no daily journal
Proves daily life absurd;
Of sudden war's intrusion,
Of four years' mad confusion,
Of Peace—and disillusion—
You simply never heard.

You read no daily sermons
Expounding the offence
Of Austrians and Germans
Who act with common sense;
Nor Hoover's exhortation
To perish of starvation,
Lest doles degrade the nation
And cause the State expense.

And many a graver matter
Has given you the slip—
The gossip-writer's chatter,
The tipster's latest "snip";
The murders and divorces;
The gloomy Dean's discourses;
The people who drew horses
In Dublin's lucky dip.

Lost amidst snows eternal,
Remote, aloof, unstirred;
For you no daily journal
Proves human life absurd.
You go your way unheeding,
While I spend hours in reading
How matters are proceeding
That should not have occurred.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, 1932

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The success of next year's Conference in achieving an international agreement to reduce world armaments will depend to a considerable extent upon the lead given by Great Britain. It is important, therefore, that the British delegation should be supported by a strong body of opinion in favour of a substantial reduction on the armed forces of the world and expenditure thereon.

I shall be grateful, therefore, if readers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION who are willing to help in a campaign for International Disarmament would communicate with me at the address below. Readers can assist (1) financially (cheques being made payable to me or to the International Disarmaments Fund); (2) by offering suggestions for the successful conduct of the campaign, and (3) by personal service. In the latter case they should state what kind of work they are prepared to do and the area in which they reside.—Yours, etc.,

14 Lower Grosvenor Place, London, S.W. 1. CECIL.
June 2nd.

WAGE REDUCTIONS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your correspondents who comment upon my article on the above subject appear to me to miss the vital point. If we begin upon a campaign of wage-reductions, where are we to stop, and how far shall we need to go in order to make our policy effective? The object of cutting wages, if I understand your correspondents aright, is to bring down the prices of manufactured goods to a level corresponding to the reduced purchasing power of the countries producing foodstuffs and raw materials. May I point out that this seems to imply wage-reductions on a far larger scale than any body of employers has yet ventured to suggest? The common argument for wage-reductions among employers is based on the contention that wages in Great Britain are too high in relation to wages in Germany and other European countries. But the discrepancy between the prices of primary products and manufactured goods applies to the goods produced by these countries as well. Apparently, then, we are first to scale down British wages to a level nearer that of Germany or France, and are then, in common with these countries, to reduce them still further until they are brought down to a parity with the present purchasing power of the countries producing primary commodities?

Can anyone contemplate such a policy except with despair? It opens up before Europe the prospect of a prolonged war of attrition against wages, with each manufacturing country trying to force down the standard of living of its workers in order to get a larger export trade, in an endless chase after a new equilibrium level with the non-industrialised countries. It means a severe setback to the whole movement for improving working-class conditions either by the development of social services or by international action through the I.L.O., and it contemplates at least a dozen years of intensive industrial warfare before the proposed equilibrium could possibly be reached.

"Employer," it is true, recognises that it would be better, instead of cutting wage-rates, to secure stabilisation of prices by international action. But he regards this policy as impracticable for the present. I do not so regard it; but I agree that it will become impracticable if an international campaign of wage-reductions is once allowed to set in. The case for wage-reductions, in the form in which it is put forward by your correspondents, is based on regarding as inevitable and incurable the present slump in the prices of primary products. But "Employer" at any rate so regards it not because he thinks nothing *could* be done, but only because he thinks nothing *will* be done, to cure it. In my view, the stronger the resistance put up by Trade Unions against wage-reductions, the better are the prospects of international action to tackle the price problem in a less disastrous way.

I also very much doubt if any wage-reductions that are practicable in the near future, either in the sheltered or in the unsheltered trades, would result in an appreciable increase in the value (or even in the volume) of our exports. In other words, I do not believe that the total demand for exports is at all highly elastic at present; and, if total demand is inelastic, I regard it as certain that wage-cutting on our part would be met by similar wage-cutting by our competitors, so as to leave us with little or no more trade than before. This is the reason why I believe that there would be a contraction in the home market as a result of the reduction in wages. I may add, in parenthesis, in reply to "Employer," that I regard dock work as an unsheltered rather than a sheltered trade.

Moreover, when I say that a further fall in prices may make wage-reductions inevitable, I do not mean that, even so, I should regard them as good, but only that the pressure on the Trade Unions might become so great as to compel their acceptance. In face of the abundance of productive capacity in the world, we ought to be steadily increasing wages and not reducing them. Only a grossly perverted monetary economy can make the case for reductions even plausible.

Mr. Miall points out that unemployment is largely concentrated in the export trades, and seems to think this a sufficient reason for reducing wages. But he assumes, what I am disposed to deny, that we could sell far more exports if we made a small reduction in their prices. He ignores my point that other countries are as much in need of keeping up exports as we are, and would retaliate by reducing their wage-rates too. Moreover, neither of your correspondents takes note of my point that wage-rates have not on the whole risen more in Great Britain than in other manufacturing countries.

I agree with "Employer" that we ought to devise means of depriving the receivers of fixed money-incomes of the unlooked-for increment in the real value of these incomes. But most of the groups which are trying to reduce wages either do not agree with this view, or have at any rate advanced no proposal for giving effect to it. This seems to me to justify the Trade Unions in standing out against wage-reductions, at any rate until some workable proposal for an all-round reduction of money-incomes is advanced. Acceptance of wage-reductions alone would only intensify the unlooked-for gains of the *rentiers*.—Yours, etc.,

G. D. H. COLE.

WANTED—A BOMB

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—May I say that I think the article by "Toreador" in your issue of May 30th is one of the very best ever written on the subject of world depression?

What the Central Bankers need is a good-sized political bomb to wake them up! They are completely paralysed—and are doing absolutely nothing whatever to fulfil their enormous obligations to the world.—Yours, etc.,

55-61 Moorgate, London, E.C. 2. R. GEMSALL.

THE UNIVERSITY SUPPLEMENT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Sir,—Why not an issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION with contributors under twenty-six who have never been to a University? As well as your original proposal, of course.

The mild rivalry might prove stimulating—Men of Letters *versus* Men of Learning would, perhaps, be a little unkind as a title.—Yours, etc.,

Dungeness, Kent. H. KAYE.

FREE SPEECH IN CHILDHOOD

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Bertrand Russell states (1) that the children of his school are not completely free; (2) that they have complete freedom of speech.

But if these children's freedom is limited, how are the limits preserved inviolate? If any form of punishment is resorted to, then the children will be afraid to speak the truth on certain occasions, and on those occasions speech will be no longer free.

I know that there are certain optimists who try to instil into children the "duty" (which no intelligent adult believes in) of always telling the truth and taking the consequences. But intelligent children tend to prefer a lie to a punishment. They realise that it is folly to entrust the truth to adults who cannot be trusted to use it intelligently.

And, of course, children are right in feeling that the deliberate administration of unnecessary pain or the gratuitous cancelling of pleasure is as hateful and unintelligent as it is futile. They know that such practices are merely devices for relieving the

feelings of an irritable adult. On that ground they may perhaps be forgiven, but never justified.

I feel certain that Mr. Bertrand Russell never punishes. Does he find that freedom can be limited as much as is necessary by personal influence and by appeals to reason?—Yours, etc.,

STEPHEN SCHOFIELD.

10 St. Annes Road, Headington, Oxford.
May 31st.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Bertrand Russell's notes on the work of the Beacon House School compel the warmest admiration for his virile and imaginative methods of education, and particularly for his determination to run a school where children may say what they like even if they may not always do what they like.

But Mr. Russell makes one casual reference to a matter on which many people would like more enlightenment, namely, the practice at Beacon Hill of the communal authorship of poetry. Can Mr. Russell say how much collaboration there really is, and who prompts it? If I may do so without offence, I should like to suggest what does possibly happen: the poetic séance ("the sitting in a group," as Mr. Russell calls it) is not a spontaneous action on the children's part, but is definitely suggested or arranged by one of the teachers. The poem is initiated by one child—and by this I mean more than that "the subject may be suggested by one of them." Not only is the subject an individual creation, but so is the imaginative bias (tragic, comic, realistic, fantastic, and so on); and so, too, is its tentative pattern (couplet, quatrain, free verse, or what not). I cannot see how the essentials of the composition can be anything but the creation of one child; and if the séance does not contain one poetic little Mussolini I cannot see how anything readable ever gets written. It seems to me that the group must contain one real little poet and several little parasite poets, whose imitative and acquisitive faculties are being unhealthily exercised by this process of communal authorship. One wonders, too, what are the sentiments of the only begetter of the poem as he sees his exciting embryo transformed by alien phrases and associations into something that may be a travesty of the shape that was maturing in his mind. In short, would it not be better to let the Poet Minor wander over the Downs with his fancy until he has consummated his idea—and then begin to call others into a ring? Can we begin too early to disclose to the children of this democratic age that some kinds of achievement are peculiarly personal and unique?

Can communal authorship, in the more intensive arts, ever be effective? Was even such a crude form as the ballad really the product of a gang of hairy savages sitting round the camp fire after supper?

I suppose I run the risk of being considered a fanatic, if I detect in a practice that Mr. Russell appears to applaud one more unconscious attempt to cramp creative personality in a society which too often fails to respect the necessary boundaries between sociological collectivism and æsthetic individualism. There are fields of activity in which we need to get together, and for which we need equally to stimulate the team spirit in children. But there are also fields of activity in which a child or a man had better be left to work alone—for society's good as much as for his own. Why must we transpose sociological and æsthetic values? Above all, why must we start running relay races up Parnassus?

Finally, I should like to ask, in no spirit but that of honest inquiry, if the twin composers of the poem called "In the Graveyard" are not far more addicted to "bookishness" than Mr. Russell knows, particularly to the verse of Mr. de la Mare? Yours, etc.,

93 Wentworth Road, N.W. 11. W. E. WILLIAMS.

QUADRAGESIMO ANNO

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your editorial comments on the new Papal encyclical entitled as above, you ask whether any ingenious "explanations" will deter Tories from using the papal pronouncements against the Labour Party. May I suggest that Tories will be very shortsighted if they attempt to use it in any such way? It is not only Communism and Socialism which are repudiated by the Popes.

In the very beginning of this new encyclical, the Pope says:

> By that noble evidence of his pastoral solicitude, our predecessor [Leo XIII] had, so to speak, prepared the ways by other letters on the family and the venerable sacrament of marriage, these foundations of human society, and on the origin of the civil power and the order of the relations which united it to the Church, on the principal duties of Christian citizens against the errors of Socialism and false theories of human liberty, and by others still in which he fully revealed his thought.

Thus, the new encyclical does far more than reaffirm Leo XIII.'s censures on Socialism and Communism. It also definitely reaffirms the doctrines of Leo in such encyclicals as *Libertas, Sapientiæ Christianæ* and *Immortale Dei*. In those encyclicals Leo condemned freedom of the press, liberty of religion (except so far as needful "for avoiding some greater evil"), and other common features of modern civilisation. He also said that the State should establish Roman Catholicism in preference to other "religions (so called)." He also said that, while the State should be "free in its own sphere," yet that freedom is conditional on its agreeing with the Roman Church or deferring to it in matters of common concern.

I do not here discuss how such doctrines can be reconciled with modern civilisation. All I point out is that Tories, or anyone else, will be unwise to try to make party capital out of the new encyclical. They may find, if they do so attempt, that they have thrown a boomerang. Whether it be because they are entwined with obsolete mediæval theories, or because they are too sublime for base uses, the fact in either case is that papal pronouncements on social questions are not adapted for use by any party against any other party. When so used they are dangerous weapons.—Yours, etc.,

Highbury, N. 5. J. W. POYNTER.

RIBBON DEVELOPMENT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

One of the major causes of ribbon development is the fact that no "road charges" have to be paid by owners of newly-erected houses fronting on county or parish roads, whereas on new roads charges of any sum from 10s. to 30s. per foot frontage on *each* side of the road have to be met by the house-owner. If the local municipal authority had power to charge a capital sum or levy an additional rate on owners of newly-built houses fronting on county or parish roads, at the *average* cost incurred by owners of houses on new roads in the same district, this would equalise costs, and to some extent prevent the tendency of ribbon development. As regards the contention that the proposed land tax would cause more land to be thrown on the market for building purposes, it has to be borne in mind that already there is more of such land being "developed" than is necessary, or for which there is an effective demand. Unless land and cost of building are materially cheapened it does not seem probable that the effective demand will be increased.—Yours, etc.,

52 Heath Road, E. F. ERRINGTON.
Petersfield.
June 1st.

TOWN PLANNING SCHEMES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As Mr. A. E. Lauder states, the Act gives power to demolish a building not conforming to the ultimate scheme, but can he give any instances of it being done in an urban, much less a rural district? The builder knows that two or three years after a house has been erected no rural district council would face the cost of fighting a case before the local bench, an appeal to the Ministry, and I believe possibly an appeal to the High Court or the House of Lords. Neither is it likely a rural bench would make the order, for very likely most of them have used galvanised iron or pink asbestos on their own sheds, and to demolish a hundred pound bungalow is a very serious matter for a poor man.

A common thing is to ignore requests or instructions and proceed to build, if there were power for the bench to inflict a fine to the value of the difference in cost and/or up to even £10, it would make people easier to deal with.

I regret to have made a mistake in my former letter; notwithstanding great efforts, it is two, not one, year since the councils having determined to prepare a scheme an active committee got its officers started, the Ministry has now had the preliminary scheme under consideration for five months, there is quite another year's work to be done and further time will probably be spent in negotiations with the Ministry now; and 'ere the final approval be

given, personally I believe quite four years will have lapsed since the proposal to make a Town Planning scheme was first approved.—Yours, etc.,

Burford Priory, Oxford. E. J. HORNIMAN.

THE LAND TAX

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The Solicitor-General says schools need not worry about the tax on their playing-fields: all they have to do is to be included in local town planning schemes. Sir Stafford Cripps will perhaps kindly explain what a school is to do if the local corporation has not adopted any scheme? Is the school to be penalised because the local authority is unprogressive?—Yours, etc.,

Grammar School, Bury. L. R. STRANGEWAYS.

KEEP OUT OF ENGLAND

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Felicitations! "Y.Y.'s" rapier thrusts may penetrate hides impervious to the bludgeoning of hard facts.

"Y. Y." knows that we send a million of our people abroad for their holidays and accept in return a meagre handful of super-intelligent foreigners, determined not to miss a sight of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

How then, says he, can we remove all the unnecessary restrictions, how bring ourselves to the level of other countries as hosts of the traveller? Only, thinks "Y. Y.," by exciting us to laugh at ourselves and to ridicule our own ineptitudes. It is an old prescription, admirably and deftly compounded and administered by Dr. "Punch," and a long line of old-time satirists before him. "Y. Y." inherits from the Elizabethan dramatists and the Reformation stage; he is in direct succession to Swift and Gilbert; in a word, he is worthy of his craft and of the pages of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

More power to his pen. His laughter may be more effective than common-sense arguments.—Yours, etc.,

L. A. DE L. MEREDITH.

General Manager, The Travel Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

BUYING BRITISH

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Sir,—May I drop the pseudonym of "Headmaster" and kill two birds with one stone?

First, I hope that I never was so rude as to rebuke Lady Horsley for quoting incorrect prices for bacon. I merely pointed out that the large gap between the two prices quoted by her was not universal, and thus inferred that the farmers and curers were not to blame for this huge discrepancy between the prices of British and Danish bacon.

Secondly, may I say that, while thanking Mr. Cadbury and others who have tried to enlighten me, I can find no solution of my original problem "If imports are paid for by exports, what is the point of the exhortation 'Buy British Goods?'" In the *Times* Mr. J. M. Keynes said that to assert that the purchase of an American car was as beneficial to British trade as the purchase of a British car seemed to him simply silly. (I quote from memory). One may well be satisfied with such an answer from such an authority.

But if the Free Traders are *not* satisfied, why have they not got the intellectual honesty to say so loudly and publicly, both in Parliament and the press, instead of allowing the public to be (from their point of view) bamboozled by "Cotton weeks" and similar campaigns designed to encourage the purchase of British goods? Can it be that they have an uneasy feeling that, in spite of theories, there is somewhere a flaw in the argument?—Yours, etc.,

King's School, Bruton, Somerset. C. H. TREMLETT.

CRITICS AND MUSICIANS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—When I read my case as it was sketchily set forth by Mr. W. J. Turner in your issue of May 16th I hardly recognised it. So far from pinning my faith to experts, and objecting to non-musicians writing about music, I make a point of ensuring that the journal I have the honour to edit contains regularly a considerable proportion of matter written by non-experts. My quarrel with the *Radio Times* is that some of its articles designed to help the listeners' understanding and appreciation of specific works are written by non-musicians, and are in the main neither helpful in style nor accurate in detail. There are some types of musical article that can be written at least as well by the amateur as by the professional, but there are others that demand an amount of technical knowledge that few amateurs possess. It is surely not extravagant to claim, as most musicians do, that articles on music should, like Broadcast Talks on the same subject, be the work of musicians; and that, as the B.B.C. calls on experts for the critical discussion of the drama, painting, literature, and science, it should do the same in regard to music. That is my case, and I have not yet seen a convincing reply to it. Mr. Turner merely sticks up that hoariest of cockshies, the specialist-pedant, and lets fly at it—an easy game, but quite beside the point at issue.—Yours, etc.,

HARVEY GRACE.

The Musical Times,
160 Wardour Street, W. 1.

THE FOUNDLING SITE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—This is the time of year when those who are interested may see little people from six years upwards tending with delight their "gardens," the plots allocated to small groups of the children from the neighbouring schools. I have just been watching some ardent "sixes" tidying up when the last of their bulbs had bloomed and died, and the flushed faces and sparkling eyes were very obvious evidences of whether they loved their garden or not.

The Foundling has become part of the lives of the children of the neighbourhood, as open-air school for some of the bigger ones, nursery for the tinies and playground for the in-betweens, and it is unthinkable that those who care for such things will give up the struggle to save the site not only for the children who have enjoyed it but for the toddlers to be, who will have no alternative but the street.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C. INTERESTED.
June 2nd.

POISONS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—When the Pharmacy and Poisons Bill was before the House of Lords, I expressed the hope that their lordships realised that the way to encourage the housewife to take essential hygienic measures was to have the effective disinfectants available—with the proper safeguards proposed in the Bill—in the ordinary shops where she did her daily shopping. Now that the Bill is about to be considered on the second reading in the House of Commons, we are being told that it will enable children to obtain poison out of penny-in-the-slot machines and murderers to obtain arsenic without risk of discovery. Now this is a Government measure, based on the findings of an expert committee, and the Government no more desires than the pharmacists to encourage the misuse of poisons, but it recognises that a change in the sale and the control of the sale of poisons is necessary in the interests of those who have to buy them for industrial agricultural and domestic use. There are adequate safeguards in the Bill to prevent misuse through ignorance and, as far as practicable, through criminal intent. The absolute prevention of deliberate criminal use is unfortunately beyond the powers of the Government or even of the Pharmaceutical Society—and in any case there are many other and easier and more pleasant ways of committing suicide than drinking disinfectant. We must not let go the substance of a useful Bill in an attempt to grasp the shadow of the useless and inconvenient "safeguard" of confining the sale of disinfectants to the chemists' shops.—Yours, etc.,

W. ARBUTHNOT LANE, President,
New Health Society.

39 Bedford Square, W.C. 1.

"THE IDEAL HOME"

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—With reference to a letter headed "The Ideal Home?" in your issue of May 16th, from Mr. T. Fisher-Smith regarding the Living Picture Gallery at the Ideal Home Exhibition, I should like to state that I at once communicated with the R.S.P.C.A., and was informed that "... this exhibition was closed some weeks ago. Our inspectors saw it and we lodged a protest with the proprietor and also with the *Daily Mail*. It was certainly

an objectionable exhibition but there was no legal cruelty and it was impossible to take proceedings in a Police Court. As a result of our intervention, it is hoped that this objectionable exhibit will not be allowed to be shown in future.

Mr. Fisher-Smith's letter to you was undated, but I think it is only fair to the R.S.P.C.A. that the public should know that they took successful action in the matter.

You may find it too late to attempt further correspondence. I regret the delay in communicating with you.—Yours, etc.,

MARY F. RATHBONE.

Brynhyfryd, Bangor, Caerne, N. Wales.
June 2nd.

BÜLOW'S MEMOIRS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Though no absolute proof is available, I gave in my review my reason for believing that Bülow did read the Emperor's *Daily Telegraph* interview. He repeatedly describes his anxiety about the Emperor's public statements and his desperate efforts to prevent their publication without revision by himself. Unless he was lying about this anxiety, it is inconceivable that he should not have read so long and important a statement as the *Daily Telegraph* interview, which he admits passed twice through his hands. I also suggested that his motive was to remove the last obstacle between himself and almost absolute power. In these circumstances the probability that he did read the interview is enormous.—Yours, etc.,

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

Miscellany

SALOME

FOR twenty or thirty years Oscar Wilde's *Salome* was considered on the Continent the most important work of serious dramatic art modern England had produced. Indeed, before the plays of Bernard Shaw had captured German and Austrian audiences it was the only English play which counted. Poor Mr. Grein, who knew more about continental opinion than anyone else, got into dreadful trouble during the war by suggesting that *Salome* should form part of English-culture propaganda abroad. He was badgered in the witness box in the ridiculous Rex *v.* Billing case, and villified as a man who sympathised with abominable things. It is all very puzzling. It is difficult for us to see such astonishing merit in *Salome*, and the performance at the Gate Theatre did little to clear up the mystery. It was not a good performance. To begin with the play was not well cast; secondly, the action was much too restless. The perpetual use of red and green lights disturbed scenes which ought to have been ominously static; the producer had evidently insisted on the actors constantly moving to and fro, in order to be first done green on one side and then done red on the other. A thunderous dream-still atmosphere is essential to the play; only in such an atmosphere can the lush misleading simplicity of its diction tell; that alone can make the hysterical agitations of Herod dramatic.

The two obvious mistakes in the casting were the parts of Salome and Jokaanan. The actor for the latter part should be chosen for an impressive voice, shaggy make-up can do the rest; but a grand and formidable voice Jokaanan must have, a voice fit for wailing and strident denunciation. Like the ghost in *Hamlet*, he has to rumble and threaten unseen from the bottom of his pit. Mr. John Clement's voice was husky and toneless, and his elocution tattered and spluttering. Salome was made up and dressed wrong. Her words of lust and hate must, to be effective, proceed from the lips of a sinister hieratic figure. Miss Margaret Rawlings resembled rather an obstinate, over-sexed, young modern woman. She has unfortunately caught from Miss Sybil Thorndike (an actress from whom there is much to be learnt) Miss Thorndike's chief defect, namely, a constant, cajoling, matter-of-fact swoop of the voice. In the part of Salome this intonation is fatal. Lust in this play is a tragic passion, but when Miss Rawlings spoke the words. "Let me kiss thy mouth, Jokaanan" she did so with an intonation which suggested that she might add, "There's a dear." The producer has not sufficiently grasped the fact that the tone and tempo of the whole dialogue throughout is Maeterlinckian, though I should have thought that it was sufficiently obvious from the text that these figures are speaking out of their dreams as much as Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene. On the Gate Theatre stage, too, nearly all the actors constantly made the mistake of trying to express intensity by bent knees and a concave crouch, a posture without dignity, and one from which it is exceedingly difficult to relax gracefully. But just because this play is a drama of lust and superstition, dignity of bearing is all-important.

Oscar Wilde was the prophet of art for art's sake. He wrote a great deal, and often with great insight, about the artistic temperament. Indeed, he figures to some as the incarnation of that temperament. He had many of the gifts and sensibilities of the artist, and he was quite sure that he was one. But he was weak in creative imagination. No one can deny that in his serious work he was essentially imitative, any more than they can deny the originality of his personality which found expression in his talk, or the excellence of his farce. His borrowing and copying would not stamp him as no artist; Molière's plea holds good for all. It is the manner of his borrowing that betrays him. It shows he had no sure sense of what beauties are transferable, or of whether they would or would not blend with other appropriations. That is to say, he had no sense of his own work as a whole; and it is this sense which, granted imagination and an excellent faculty, distinguishes the creative artist, whose work may, or may not be, something entirely new.

He picked up anything that attracted him by its shine and glitter (for such his instinct was admirable) and like a jackdaw carried it off to his nest. As his depredations were frequent, and as they were embedded in a personal style of peculiar, sumptuously simple quality, in which only a very limited number of emotions and impressions could be congruously expressed, this defect in creative power is continually forced upon the reader's notice.

Now *Salome* is the nearest approach to being a complete whole among his works, and its defects, in spite of its brilliancy, are precisely of this nature. In it two inconsistent atmospheres are mixed together; and a form of expression essentially appropriate to solitary imaginings is used as a method of dramatic dialogue; with the result that the language, in spite of being passionate, often strikes the listener as weak and artificial. The play is a mixture of Flaubert's *Herodias* and Maeterlinck; and the dialogue, when it is not in either of these keys, is composed of speeches in the style of the Song of Songs, from which all the most splendid phrases are taken. Oscar Wilde has not felt that the passion of the Song of Songs is a mood of ecstatic meditation, of absence, and that in the presence of the object of adoration the passion and the poetry to keep their strength must alter their expression. The result is that with *Salome* and *John the Baptist* before your eyes you are astonished that such abandonment and exaltation of language should leave you so cold, and since the expression and rhythm is often masterly, you are half persuaded for the moment that all literature must be a fake.

The atmosphere of Flaubert and that which Maeterlinck creates by his method are absolutely incongruous; the one depends upon a glaring definiteness of detail and significance, the other upon a suggestion that nothing really is what it

seems. Flaubert drew poetry from his subject by depicting the appalling matter-of-factness of barbaric emotion and splendour. The spirit of brutal negation glares like a parching desert sun over all life, no incident throws a shadow in in which the sympathies can take refuge; the superstitions of men are facts which rouse no wonder or speculation. In this light forms and colours strike on the sight; they have no rivals for the imagination in the shape of associations or emotions, and the passions as bare natural forces have in action a kind of tigerish beauty. To throw, over a scene so conceived, the moonshine of Maeterlinck is to destroy both.

It is mystifying that *Salome* should have been considered abroad for so long a masterpiece of poetic tragedy, though it is a better play than those who saw it at the Gate Theatre may have been inclined to think. Mr. Robert Speaight's Herod was the best performance, and his hankerings and tremors, as of a nerve racked Heliogabalus, would have been far more dramatically effective against a less restless background.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

THE DANCING GIRL OF SIND

THE dancing girl of Sind has come to London, where she awaits the recognition of her merits. Her poise declares a provoking indifference. It had become a habit with her, since first she learned in her daring nakedness to face men's eyes. "A fig," she seems to say, "for your applause. It is for my unveiled body, and not for the grace of my steps and the rhythm of my song." She stands with pouting lips, right hand on hip, and her head, with its tangle of braided hair, is set at an angle of challenge and derision; slender she is to excess, but there is a lithe beauty in the lines of her back that stirs the imagination, and awakens the silence till one hears the beat of a drum, the rattle of her bracelets, and a haunting Indian air, gliding with sinuous steps through the subtleties of its quarter-tones. In this posture, moulded in copper, she lay concealed through five thousand years below the sands of Sind; and now, in London, she confronts us in her tense humanity, inviting us, as it were, to guess what measure she danced before the altar of what forgotten god.

The god, indeed, may well have been a deity who reigns to-day in the heart of the Indian people. The three glass cases which stand among the Moghul paintings in the Burlington Fine Arts Club, have their due interest, if one accepts them as the relics of an immeasurably distant past. Seen, as I saw their contents, in their own background, thanks to the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Mackay and Dr. Guha, they refused to be isolated, and blended with the life around them. Something, indeed, India has forgotten of her most ancient self, but much of it is the foundation on which she still builds and reasons. The work of Sir John Marshall and Mr. Ernest Mackay, who are digging up the two prehistoric sites of the Indus Valley, has thrown back the origins of Indian civilisation a good two thousand years. Our cousins, the Aryan invaders, must have been as barbarous, when they scaled the Afghan passes, as were the Greeks and the Celts, when first they penetrated the realms of the Mediterranean culture. Here, emerging from the sands, is the civilisation which first attracted and then absorbed them. This culture of the Indus Valley, which built rich cities contemporary with Ur of the Chaldees, stands to the Hindoo tradition as Minoan Crete stood to Hellenic art and thought.

At these two sites, Mohenjo-Daro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab, one realises that one is in the presence of a high urban civilisation. These towns were deliberately built like a modern American city, on a rectangular plan. The brick masonry, especially of the older strata, is admirable in technique, and in one building there is even a damp-course of bitumen, which may have come from Mesopotamia. Down every street runs a carefully constructed covered drain, and at intervals manholes, with corbelled vaulting, provide for its cleaning. At Mohenjo-Daro an elaborately finished tank, possibly the centre of a cult, is surrounded by a cloister, fitted with many little bathrooms, which may have served for a baptismal rite. But every house had its bathroom, and the inference from all this elaborate building and planning is that a remarkably clean race enjoyed a highly organised municipal administration. Nothing suggests a violent end for this civilisation. The Indus must have been then, as now, a turbulent and erratic stream, which will change its course after devastating floods. One supposes that after many rebuildings, ranging roughly from about 3500 B.C. or earlier, to about 2750 B.C., the patience of their inhabitants was exhausted, and after a gradual impoverishment and degeneration, they migrated elsewhere.

From the little that they left, accidentally, behind them, it is evident that they possessed all the primary arts. Though flint was in daily use, they worked in copper, bronze, silver and gold. They cultivated wheat, and had domesticated the buffalo, two kinds of cattle, the sheep, the pig, two breeds of dog, and the horse. A fragment of cloth proves on analysis to be of cotton, the earliest in the world's records. Their toys show models of wheeled carts and of a covered chariot, which again may be the earliest known. It is a probable guess from the innumerable fragments of a certain pot, still in use locally for this purpose, that they had Persian wheels for irrigation. Their jewellery of gold, cornelian and other semi-precious stones, seemed to me more remarkable for its curious etching craftsmanship (still in use locally) than for its taste. They had accurately graded weights, and played with dice and pieces resembling chess pawns. Of warfare there is little indication.

About the genius of these primitive Indians in the arts it is difficult to generalise. They left behind them many valueless things, extremely crude as art—children's toys, and rough terra-cotta statuettes of the Great Mother, which may have been made, like modern Bengali gods, to be thrown into the water. Two busts of men are invaluable documents but poor works of art. But two broken figurines of dancing girls, both in this exhibition, seem to me to belong to high and sensitive traditions. The artist who made the copper figure from Mohenjo-Daro had the ability to suggest temperament and emotion, and he was a master of rhythmic line; the more obviously beautiful torso in black stone from Harappa, shows exquisite modelling but in a wholly different and perhaps later style. The many little figures of animals are spirited and delicate in execution.

This civilisation survives most eloquently in its seals. The drawing is usually admirable, the craftsmanship sure, and occasionally one delights in the grace of a conventional design. On most of them are the decorative characters of an as yet undeciphered script. These seals it was which gave the clue to the date of this Indus civilisation and its place in the pre-history of the East. Five of them were found in Kish and Ur, unmistakable in their alien type, together with some of the peculiar etched jewels, a sure proof that a tie, at least of commerce, united the Indus with the Tigris in the earliest period of Elam and Sumeria. But the tie may well have been closer. The physical traits and the odd hair-dress of these short-headed men from India, recall the Sumerian type and the scrips have a family likeness.

One tries, as one paces these tidy streets, to guess how these men, who pioneered with wheels and cotton, conceived their universe. They adhered to the most catholic of all religions: they worshipped the Great Mother. Her images

recall the snake goddess of Crete, and here, too, her dove attended her. Fertility and the Spirit of Vegetation these proto-Indians venerated in trees. He was, as a seal suggests, a King of the Wood. Sacred beyond other trees was the *pipal*, with its decorative, spiked leaves. To it they sacrificed goats, and to this day in Sind men lay before it an offering of flowers. In one unusually elaborate seal we are shown the marriage of two trees, a rite which still lingers in India. There are traces, too, of Siva's cult.

Both of these evidently kindred peoples revelled in inventing fantastic animals. Animals, indeed, are the commonest subject of the seals—elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers and bulls. The favourite subject, however, is a unicorn. His body resembles a bull with one curved horn. On the Indus, men drew him with deep conviction; was he, one asks, the totem of a numerous, perhaps a royal, clan? On one recently discovered seal an image of this mythical creature is being carried on a standard, apparently in procession. Precisely so did the Egyptians depict the totems of their *nomes*.

It is, one perceives, a linked and companionable world that the digger's spade uncovers, from India to Crete. What each contributed to the complex of discoveries which first made civilisation, we may never surely know. But this one cannot doubt: that men dared, five thousand years ago, to carry their wares, their inventions and their fancies, over dangerous seas, in a cabin built amidships on a high-prowed boat. Ideas travelled with these seals, and with their jewels, men exchanged their gods.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

THE BLESSED ISLAND

I SHALL be quite at home with the mountains of Heaven,
The scarps and shadows and streams of the valleys of death,
Crystal brilliance of dawn, soft richness of evening's colour.

Because of the landscapes of Earth there are grades of vision,
Only at times vouchsafed, but of clear identity,
Scenes of a kingdom not coming with observation
(Anywhere, it may chance, in the happy moment),
Grades of the sensual perception of living beauty
Quickening through natural shapings—
(the methods of Art have short-cuts).

Not here first, in this Island, but here, in a lifetime, oftenest
Came these moments to me: and here with most sudden impulsion,
Unmistakable, charged with assurance and exultation,
Sense of power and promise and ocean-buoyance of spirit,
After long absence resume, and are never for long denied me.

And whereas for me these regions are full of dead men's friendships,
Here, more potent than elsewhere, abides what there was between us—
Was—and abides unchanged.

And I know these scenes and shadows are one with the settings of Heaven,
Because in these green pastures and by these waters of comfort
I know that God is my shepherd—
And from these hills comes strength.

Jamaica, 1931. S. O.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

St. Jeanne D'Arc

WHEN Joan, "commonly called *The Maid*," as is stated in the letter of Pierre, by divine mercy (how ironically true is the conventional phrase!) Bishop of Beauvais, came to her trial in March, 1431, she had been nine months in prison. No one would guess that when Miss Jean Forbes-Robertson, in Mr. Edward Garnett's chronicle, *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*, walks on to the stage at the Arts Theatre. Here was a grave error in production; and it is only one of many. This chronicle should have been produced against a plain back-cloth, or at the most two or three screens; there should have been no attempt at elaborate settings. The play was badly produced, and no actor was really satisfactory. I cannot imagine who had the unfortunate idea of dressing up Mr. Ben Webster in almost full festival pontificals for the sad solemnity of the trial—his robes added to his natural difficulty in finding the range of so small a stage. Of the other actors Mr. Earle Grey was unpleasantly seductive as Nicholas Loiseleur, and Mr. Garside was appealing in his part. But this play, which consists of historic dialogue farsed with a little dramatic commentary, depends on Joan; and Miss Forbes-Robertson, in spite of her loveliness and her skill, was never Joan. Joan was a child, but she was a child with great force of character; and she drew that force, and her conviction of its validity, from outside herself. Her answers to her judges should come slowly, prophetically, accusingly as from one inspired, and one who is, in spite of her inspiration, aware of unworthiness. She may be tired and broken, but not self-pitying; and her mind should convey, through her speech, something of the celestial radiance that surrounded and supported her. She has got beyond wonder, long before this trial; she knows herself set apart, and secure, and guided in her dialectic as in her strategy. Miss Forbes-Robertson was beautiful, but her acting belonged rather to the realm of faery than of religious faith: she listens to her voices as if they are music, instead of a message. I felt she was hampered by the production, and by the company's unawareness of what scene it was they were enacting. If a play of this simplicity is to succeed, it is necessary that every actor should know the events of the trial, should know the judges' questions and the Maid's answers with the same religious intensity that the players of Oberammergau bring to another trial and another criminal.

Tiger Cats?

The acting of Mr. Robert Loraine and Miss Edith Evans fails by some margin to excuse the revival at the Royalty Theatre of this mildly distressing piece. The deplorable women are tabbies, not tigers, and not even Mr. Loraine can convince us that their victims amount to anything bigger than a couple of pigeons. What sort of a man is this great scientist, whose drawers are filled with letters from adoring women students and who cannot organise his work to prevent its being constantly interrupted by his wife's nagging? The thrilling roughnesses of Mr. Loraine's speech, his grim determination under torture and his stern seriousness cannot disguise the essential soft, plump feebleness of Suzanne's prey. Miss Evans, not unsurprisingly, fails to make Suzanne recognisably human. But more disappointing was the apparent diminution of her range and subtlety of effects. Here, surely, was opportunity for the creation of something fantastic, superhuman, bewilderingly scintillant. In place of it we were given two hours of a snarling, red-polled harridan, whose postures, mental and physical, were as obvious as they were tedious.

Argentina at the Adelphi

The traditional dancing of Spain, like that of the rest of Europe, is an honest sort of merry-making. It is only beyond the borders of Castile that a graver and more expressive style remains as witness of the African past. Flamenco, as it is called, is a ceremonial with stylised gestures, immensely dramatic within a narrow range of emotions. Like cricket and bull-fighting, it presents a certain monotony to the inexpert spectator. For at least fifteen years, I think, Argentina has been accepted by the Spaniards as their greatest dancer, and she is now at the summit of her powers. It is one more feather in Mr. Cochran's already heavily feathered cap to have added London to Paris, New York, Berlin and the other capitals which are at her feet. For the circumstances of her previous appearances here gave little chance of properly appreciating her powers. But now she has had a triumph. In becoming international she has made her art sweeter and more varied, but has inevitably surrendered something of the distinctive harshness of Spain. She is still at her best when most traditional, and when she is at her best she is unparalleled. The flounces of her skirts surge and billow innumerably, the insistent heels beat, the lovely arms curve back, and with the bent knees which give Flamenco its most characteristic movement, she parades the stage, a flaunting African bird. Her face is a whole repertory of expressive masks, and her castanets are two great histrions perfectly matched.

"La Forza del Destino"

It is astonishing that Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*, first produced in St. Petersburg in November, 1862, should have had to wait until this week for its first Covent Garden performance. It is a strange gloomy work of unequal quality but containing some magnificent things. The duet between Don Carlo and Don Alvaro in the fourth act is one of the most thrilling in all opera and is a perfect example of that dramatic violence of which Verdi was a great master. But the whole of the last act from Leonora's magnificent aria *Pace, pace mio Dio!* to the concluding trio, which is one of those musical achievements faultless in conception and execution before which criticism is silent, is superb. If the whole opera were on this level it would be one of Verdi's greatest works. There are good things everywhere, and the scenes with the Friar Melitone, a real creation, are excellent, but the opera lacks coherence as a whole, and the gay scenes introduced in the third act to lighten a tale of unbroken gloom, are not completely successful. The "ratapan" chorus which concludes this act seems, in this production, one of Verdi's rare miscalculations; but surely there may be a way of handling this chorus that would give a quite different result. The orchestra was good under Tullio Serafin, an excellent conductor who has not been to Covent Garden for many years. Pertile as Don Alvaro and Franci as Don Carlo both oversang grossly in the depraved Italian style which Toscanini alone among conductors seems able to control. As a consequence their culminating duet lost force, and much of the music was given a banality that does not belong to it. Pasero, as the Padre Guardrino, was the only one of the men singers free from this fault, the only one of the principals, therefore, who, as an artist, could be said to have deserved to share with Rosa Ponselle the applause of the enthusiastic audience. As for Rosa Ponselle, she is probably the greatest Italian singer of the day—her performance in *La Forza del Destino* should on no account be missed.

Miss Bankhead Talking

Miss Tallulah Bankhead's first talkie, *Tarnished Lady*, is an extremely boring film, dealing with the financial distresses of expensively minded people in New York, which is a very boring subject. Miss Tallulah Bankhead is a girl who, having grossly exceeded her income, is compelled to marry a millionaire, and spends most of the film grousing interminably on the abominable way in which she has been treated. The picture has been designed with the sole object of enabling Miss Bankhead to go through her tricks, the technique being that of a very poor play, in which the dialogue is negligible. There is no interesting brainwork behind the photography, and Miss Bankhead's own technique does not improve by being transferred to the screen. Still, people who want to see Miss Tallulah Bankhead doing it again will have their chance. Hollywood, which can always turn out a first-rate thriller, seems as childish as ever when it comes to the emotions. It was sad to see the talents of Clive Brooke wasted in *Tarnished Lady*.

Folk Songs

Old French and English folk songs and songs of a similar character arranged by modern composers, formed the programme of Mlle. Collignon's recital on Tuesday last at the Children's Theatre. To render such songs rightly and with delicacy is a difficult art, for it is necessary to strike the mean between childishness and sophistication. Mlle. Collignon's crystal voice is peculiarly suited to the task. She has perfect enunciation, an important asset for the singing of folk songs, for if the words are not clearly heard the value of the song is lost. I found the modern settings particularly pleasing, although I was a little distracted by the sophisticated harmonies of Mr. Howell's arrangement of the graceful flowing melody of *Angèle au Couvent*. Mlle. Collignon's appropriate and charming little gestures added greatly to her performance. Mr. Harold Scott, who assisted at the piano, contributed three amusing items, including *Polly Perkins of Paddington Green*.

* * *

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Saturday, June 6th—

"A Knight Passed By," by Jan Fabricius, Ambassadors Theatre.

Myra Hess and Jelly D'Aranyi, Beethoven Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

Sunday, June 7th—

S. K. Ratcliffe on "Talking About Religion," Conway Hall, 11.

Monday, June 8th—

"Falstaff," Covent Garden, 8.

Daisy Kennedy and Miklos Schwalb, Beethoven Recital, Grotrian Hall, 8.30.

Gerhardt, Schumann-Brahms-Strauss Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

Tuesday, June 9th—

Debate on "Encouraging Illiteracy," between the Rev. Canon J. O. Hannay and the Rev. C. A. Alington, London School of Economics, 5.30.

Miss Cornelia Otis Skinner, St. James' Theatre.

"Traviata," Covent Garden.

Wednesday, June 10th—

John Goss, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Thursday, June 11th—

"I Want," by Constance Holme, Grafton Theatre.

Irene Scharrer, Chopin-Schumann Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Royal Horse Show, Richmond.

Friday, June 12th—

"Noé," by André Obey, Arts Theatre.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE new edition of Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (Constable, 15s.) might provide material for a dozen such papers as this. Not only is there an enchanting note by the translator, Miss Helen Waddell, but in an introduction that displays all his old vivacity, variety and discursiveness Dr. Saintsbury writes of the story as a man "who has read it at twenty, at forty, at sixty and at eighty, with always fresh astonishment and admiration." No one who has read this perfect tale before should fail to read it again, and I envy those who come to it for the first time in this lovely guise. Miss Waddell suggests with felicity a comparison between Prévost and Goldsmith—"There is the same extreme susceptibility to goodness, the same angelic simplicity, the same complete inconsequence"; true as this is, there was something in Prévost which Goldsmith had not, or if he had it, never showed in his work—a high poetic imagination. The Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut, the young, generous man of the world, with his odd "gentlemanly" standard that forbad neither cheating at cards nor manslaughter, the girl who did not dream that constancy was a quality necessary to love, these persons out of the world of fashion, vice and elegance are creatures of poetry. Here, if I may have the temerity to try and explain what Dr. Saintsbury declares to be inexplicable, resides the secret of this extraordinary book's "intense humanity." A story that we would more naturally compare with a tale of Crébillon's or Richardson's or Goldsmith's insists on being judged by other standards. We are horrified, and rightly, at the complacency of those critics that would compare *Manon Lescaut* with *Paul et Virginie*, for we know that its only proper parallel is *Romeo and Juliet*.

* * *

There are, of course, not a few prose works which have in them something of the poetic. *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Arcadia*, even in its odd way *Euphues* follow a poetic rather than a prose convention. It is easy to think of any of these three books in verse rather than prose, while verse would be inappropriate for the *Satyricon*, for *Jack Wilton* or for *Robinson Crusoe*. Prévost's story is, so far as I know, the earliest example of a prose work in which the protagonists are figures not of prose but of poetry. They live, that is, on the level of intense passion which people in actual life avoid because of its consequent inconveniences. If an artist portrays such people without having recourse to the poetic imagination, without an appeal to our faith in poetic truth, he will make them ridiculous. They can only move nobly and naturally in a world where the values are those of poetry, the only finally suitable artistic vehicle for the portrayal of overwhelming passion; because in poetry alone can we have the union of passion and imagination, the reconciliation of wisdom and wit. There is no more difficult kind of writing than that which Prévost accomplished in this story. Many books, more than one likes to think of, owe their inspiration to *Manon Lescaut;* and the only tales that can rival it are those in which the authors have departed very widely from their original—have gone to the same source but not attempted any slavish discipleship. But for *Manon Lescaut* there would have been no *Scarlet Letter* and no *Wuthering Heights;* nor, strange as it may seem, would the stir and spirit of beauty ever have troubled the contented earthiness of Soames Forsyte.

* * *

Dr. Saintsbury, with that sense which makes him so sound a critic, points out that Manon Lescaut is not a lady. Indeed, it is difficult to fit ladies into the poetic; for in the world of poetry it may chance, at any moment, that the actor has to go naked, and it would be trivial to alleviate one's nakedness with nothing but a coat-of-arms. We know too little of Prévost's philosophy (except as expressed here) to know whether he realised the implications of his story, or meant to point out any moral beyond the great moral of "the world well lost"; but, if they do not disdain her company, the feminists can claim Manon as an early champion of their cause. Consider the chief difficulties of des Grieux with his mistress. He finds her conduct intolerable, base, vile, that of a jade, a trickster. He cannot understand her apparent innocence when she has found shelter and luxury with a rival, and still professes to love him. Of course, in the end Manon learns fidelity, but she must have always puzzled a little over her lover's outbursts of wrath. So many men, then and now, have assured their wives or their mistresses that to give more than a kiss means little enough; kindness should not be limited, and in a way infidelity is a compliment if the unfaithful can assure his "real she" that it is her image only that he finds in others' arms. That humbug was never Manon's. Hers was the simple philosophy of the man of pleasure who is also a kind man—and there are such; and it must have dismayed other men besides her lover to see how vile their own conduct appears when it is practised by a woman. Manon Lescaut is the first—and she remains the finest and most perfect—woman in fiction in whom the author has pictured the maddening, innocent unawareness of one who remains quite unconscious of her lover's jealous anxiety. Love for her is pleasure, a distraction and a delight. It is something to take gladly and enjoy, and if you cannot have it with him whom you love best, why grudge it to another who loves and longs for you? When des Grieux is absent it does not occur to Manon to worry where he is, or with whom; and she cannot realise that in his absence from her he does nothing but expend himself in furious expectation. The scene between the lovers when des Grieux finds her in the house of G—— M—— is a masterpiece of sensitive and imaginative interpretation. As Manon tells her story, her lover cannot keep his anger, and at the end he reflects:

> By an odd twist of sympathy which is peculiar to me, I was touched by the ingenuousness of her story, and her simple open way of telling even those circumstances which outraged me most. She sins without malice, I said to myself; she is fickle and rash, but she is straightforward and sincere.

* * *

Yet if the story had stayed on that level it would have failed. Manon learns that love is more than a pleasure; des Grieux's loyalty leads her into new and intenser levels of feeling and imagination. There is a hard road to go before des Grieux makes his fine challenge, "Leave it to vulgar lovers to dread the indissoluble chains of marriage. They would not dread them if they were sure as we are of wearing just as surely those of love." There is a more tragic way for them to take after that brave saying, but Manon by then has been placed securely in the company of the great lovers: and men do not utter the names Abelard and Heloise, Romeo and Juliet with more emotion than those of Manon and des Grieux. It is just two hundred years ago that the first edition—from which Miss Waddell's version has been made—was published in Antwerp; two hundred years since Aphrodite stepped so strangely, and under so unlikely auspices, into prose fiction. Since then the novel of passion has taken strange guises, especially in the country of its origin. As I re-read Prévost's simple and profound tale, I still had in my ears the last echoes of Proust's masterpiece, and I put down *Manon Lescaut* with a sigh for the lover's sad inability to learn either from happiness or sorrow.

RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

All Passion Spent. By V. SACKVILLE-WEST. Hogarth Press. 7s. 6d.

Hatter's Castle. By A. J. CRONIN. Gollancz. 8s. 6d.

The Man With the Two Mirrors. By EDWARD KNOBLOCK. Chapman and Hall. 7s. 6d.

These Characters are Imaginary. By RICHARD STRACHEY. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Ming and Magnolia. By CATHERINE I. DODD. Jarrolds. 7s. 6d.

As the right author can make any subject interesting, an unpromising subject can actually stimulate the reader with the proof it should provide of the author's originality and independence. What a fillip, therefore, is given to the novel-reader's anticipation by the announcement that Miss Sackville-West's new book is a "study of extreme old age." How the unromantic theme sharpens expectation of all that will prevent its dulness!—unless, of course (the suspicion is bound to arise) the disability of such a passionless theme be evaded by making age devote itself to the reminiscence of the passions of youth. For sympathetic old age in books is apt to spend most of its time being young. But though Miss Sackville-West's old Lady Slane does constantly become a girl in retrospect, the unusual feat is actually accomplished here of presenting old age as something worth creating in itself—as if it had a status independent of its connection with youth, and might have existed even if youth had never done so. Lady Slane is the most vital person in the book by virtue of the author's study of the actual qualities of old age; and her "children," ranging round sixty, and their children in turn, being younger, are less alive with this particular life of old age. They are a poor crew anyway. One daughter, Edith, is possessed of an ounce of wits, and is able to formulate such meditations as: "What a queer thing appearance was, and how unfair. It dictated the terms of people's estimate throughout one's life. If one looked insignificant, one was set down as insignificant; yet one probably didn't look insignificant unless one deserved it." But it is old age, in Lady Slane's version, that counts, and that has that fine stripped quality, which illness can share, of shams and inessentials vanished. When her husband dies Lady Slane is led about gently from one chair to another by her descendants. "They treated her rather as though she had had an accident, or had gone temporarily off her head"—while she herself has only an aged unpretentious acceptance of death. For Lady Slane is not sentimentalised, and it is into old age that is really old that she retires, with her old maid, Genoux, and her bodily infirmities.

> All these parts of the body became intensely personal: my back, my tooth, my finger, my toe; and Genoux was the only person who knew exactly what she meant by a sudden exclamation as she fell back into her chair, the bond between herself and Genoux thereby strengthening to the pitch of the bond between lovers, of an exclusive physical intimacy. Of such small things was her life now made.... All tiny things, contemptibly tiny things, ennobled only by their vast background, the background of Death.

The independence one hoped for from the theme is precisely to be found in these pages; and that period of life which new young writers have delighted to ransack for what they could despise is here made important without an evasion or exaggeration. Miss Sackville-West has explored this ancient country with as delicate an observation as she has any actual one.

Hatter's Castle, on the other hand, the tale of a hatter and his family in Scotland in the 1880's, is content—is proud—to follow good well-worn themes of fiction. This book, however, has qualities that resemble *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, in its slow, thorough way of adding detail to detail that seem of incomplete significance in themselves only because complete significance is reserved for the whole. *Hatter's Castle*, though not much more than competently and untiringly circumstantial in its narrative, in its whole gives some of the overwhelming sense of fate of that other book. An author who is able to convey a sound of impartiality in his events, so that one is quickly convinced that turns of good or evil fortune *could* come equally well from his unprejudiced pen, can contrive to create the impression that nothing less than fate is speaking through him. And even though the events do tend one fatal way it seems only because impartiality itself is powerless. *Hatter's Castle*, indeed, is driven by a wind it cannot control into all the detail of sordid and horrible ill-fortune. James Brodie, its chief figure, carries in his character the doom of his family. His dreadful intimate oppression of his wife, and his insane driving of his daughters to calamity and suicide, and his own undoing in business and in a barmaid love-affair, are certainly a theme for a novelist, but Dr. Cronin has not so much used the theme as been used by it.

Mr. Knoblock's has been an out-and-out novelist's quest. He has gone out to find a novel, determined to bring back as fine a specimen as anyone. Never was anything more in one person's hands than his novel in his—no check, nor partnership, for him, with either imagination or experience. And characters and incidents present no difficulties to so resourceful a writer, however unaided; they trip from his pen fluently, and there is no conceivable reason why they should ever cease, or stop to breathe, or do anything that would bring them connected with life. Here is an author who can show you crowded pages, and supply a type for everyone, from a vamp to a waiter. As for landladies, they are easy.

> Mrs. Medley swept forward to receive them—a sparse fifty, brown beady eyes, dark hair worn with an "Alexandra" fringe, a magenta satin blouse cut in a discreet "V," and a bugled belt clasping a tight waist from which flourished an ample, bell-shaped skirt of some black material .... She expatiated sibilantly on the excellence of her establishment; as she spoke her teeth shot forward over lips revealing half an inch of gums. She was alarmingly elegant in her manner and speech. "Dinner at ayte, mawdom," she smiled. "Naturally Ay'll see that the young gentleman is playced with you. And the mayd shall bring hot water in a jiffay." With another revealing of the gums she slanted out of the room.

(What pronunciation, by the way, different from the normal, pertains to "playced" and "ayte" and "mayd"?) In this large and well-stocked area the reader long clings to the hope of finding treasure, and is disappointed; but those who do not hope for too much may find vivacious entertainment.

In spite of the title of Mr. Strachey's book, these characters are as little imaginary as the dismaying objects that one encounters in unpleasing places, or any thing that would not somehow be likely to come into being under any other necessity than that of indisputable reality. Brief indifferent love at studio-parties, ennobled, one is afraid the characters think, by the glib intellectualism displayed on all sides, infects one with the dreariness that accompanies the assertion and paraphernalia of love, when no glamour or attraction is conveyed. The intellectualism consists for the most part only of knowing how Philistine are the Philistines; but in numerous parentheses an ambitious attempt is made to record the semi-coherencies of unspoken thoughts, and the incoherence of drunken ones. The ambitions of the book are all in its favour, and it is here Mr. Strachey achieves his greatest successes, using with surprisingly certain effect a method first tried in Mr. Joyce's *Ulysses*. This is a first novel of quite unusual power; and I wish Mr. Strachey cheerfuller company for his next book.

Ming and Magnolia, I confess, leaves me at a loss. If it had begun at about page 131, and ended about page 217, I should say what a charming Queen Anne young woman was Prue Flowerdew; and how delightfully she writes her diary; and what a particularly pleasant and shrewd person is her Aunt Judith; and, where the "period" effect is so authentic, how little I mind a pace so leisurely that a recipe for *pot pourri* or for the marvellous cooking of a pike seem hardly to deter it. But what is to be said of the preamble beforehand, with its mysterious Ming vase, its hints at symbolism, and searchings-round for any embroidery of the Prue-Flowerdew theme; and what of the artificial-sounding ending of her romance which occurs after the cessation of her diary has seemed already to remove her from the pages?

PROTEUS.

THE TRAGIC COMEDIAN

Lassalle. By ARNO SHIROKAUER. Translated from the German by EDEN and CEDAR PAUL. Allen and Unwin. 15s.

Even very few educated people, who know something about the nineteenth-century history of Europe, and of the rise of Socialism, Trade Unionism, and political Labour Parties, would feel happy if they suddenly had to answer an examination question: "What do you know about the character, life, and achievements of Ferdinand Lassalle?" Lassalle is one of those persons whose place in history is occupied almost entirely by a name. An Englishman will think of him vaguely as a Jew, a Socialist, and the hero of one of Meredith's novels—and there his knowledge will end. There are historical reasons for this ignorance, for history never altogether blindly scatters her poppy of oblivion. During his lifetime Lassalle exercised a very great influence; the measure of his power is shown by the fact that

for a short time he negotiated with the great Bismarck on equal terms. He has claims to be counted as the founder of the German Social-Democratic Party. But temperamentally and philosophically he was an individualist rather than a Socialist; his beliefs and ideals were tuned to the rhythm of the Declaration of the Rights of Man rather than to that which produced the Marxian Manifesto. He died in 1864, at the very beginning of that period which was to see Socialism and Labour grow up under the dominating influence of Marx and Engels, of the Manifesto and the International. To Marx and Engels Lassalle was a swashbuckler, a ridiculous poseur, a "common rogue"; he was nothing more to their disciples, Liebknecht and Bebel. Thus Social-Democrats and Socialists, when they praised their famous men, sometimes mentioned Lassalle, but what he was and what he did were forgotten. He became an empty historical name.

A good biography of Lassalle would be well worth writing and reading. The material has only been available since 1925, when Prince Hatzfeldt, grandson of Countess Sophie Hatzfeldt, allowed the letters and manuscripts, which had lain for sixty years in Sommerberg Castle, to be published. Lassalle is a magnificent subject for biography. His position in history, his relation to those mysterious movements of the human mind which have magically conjured the Europe of Palmerston and Bismarck into the Europe of Stalin, Dr. Curtius, and Mr. MacDonald, would repay investigation. But beyond that is the immense "personal" interest, the hectic drama of his life, the extraordinary complication of his frenzied personality.

The biography which we are now given, and which is described on the jacket as "a brilliant representation of the man and his time" and "the first adequate biography of Lassalle to appear in the English language," seems to me a lamentable production. It has all the worst faults of modern biographical method and hardly any of its merits. It is pretentious, over-dramatised, perpetually and usually inappropriately ironic, with a maddening and unsuccessful determination to be unceasingly brilliant. The author is always getting between Lassalle and the reader, in order to let off some damp and pedantic squib or in order to explain either that black is black or, more often, that black is white. Only a very determined and intelligent reader, by dodging and peeping behind the ponderous figure of Herr Shirokauer, will occasionally catch a glimpse of poor Lassalle as he really was in the background. Herr Shirokauer is so much occupied with being clever and brilliant that he has no time to attempt to understand his victim. Superficially and from the ordinary standpoint, Lassalle was continually making a fool of himself. Any one in Potsdam or Putney can see that he was ridiculous, flamboyant, vulgar, vain, pompous. Taking the cheap and easy way, it is this side of the picture that Herr Shirokauer stresses, invariably giving Lassalle's vices and absurdities the benefit of any doubt. His misunderstanding of Lassalle is often ludicrous. There is a wonderful example on one page. He quotes a very interesting letter in which Lassalle, after describing a service in a mosque and the howling dervishes during his travel in the near East, remarks that both performances recalled to him the Jewish ceremonies and ceremonial of his youth. They are all, he says, of the same origin and give expression to "the original religious consciousness of the Semites, to the religious philosophy peculiar to the Semitic temperament, to the feeling of utter worthlessness and nullity, of overwhelming penitence and abasement." No one but a Semite watching Semites and conscious that he himself was a Semite, who had sung in his synagogue the same song which David sang when he danced before the Ark, who had himself inherited the traditions of that ancient and melancholy civilisation with its feeling of utter worthlessness and nullity, could possibly have written this passage. Yet Herr Shirokauer writes a page of comment in order to turn the whole thing upside down. He reads into Lassalle's words things which are not there, things which are the exact opposite of Lassalle's meaning, and then naïvely remarks: "It is amazing to watch the Semite Lassalle, who is so obviously endowed with all the merits and all the defects of his race, wandering among the Semites, coolly watching them, dispassionately taking notes of their antics, honestly conceiving himself to be a stranger when he is in reality moving among his brethren." Another absurd misunderstanding of Lassalle will be found in that passage where he is represented as a man who thought that it was possible "to dispense with personal experience" and to confine oneself to the knowledge extracted from books. If ever a man pursued personal experience like a maniac, it was Lassalle. How could the obscure, flamboyant, despised Jew of Breslau have converted himself into the Ferdinand Lassalle, who was famous throughout Germany as the leading revolutionist, who was the intimate of a Countess and the lover of Helene von Dönniges, who moved in every kind of society, who, according to Bismarck, was "one of the most intelligent and amiable men with whom I have ever had to do, ambitious in the grand style," unless he had flung himself into every personal experience with a passionate determination to learn everything possible from life itself?

The really interesting thing in Lassalle is his psychological complexity, the extraordinary combination of intellectuality with this frenzied pursuit of experiences. Even Herr Shirokauer cannot entirely obscure that interest. It may perhaps be thought that I have been too severe upon the biographer; but it is impossible to be too severe upon a biographer who writes in a style of which the following is a good example:

> Lassalle, having encased his intellect in the armour-plate of dialectic, now acquired a horny skin in the marshy pool of the Hatzfeldt trial, and took a bath of dragon's blood.

LEONARD WOOLF.

THE GREATNESS OF VERDI

Giuseppe Verdi. His Life and Works. By FRANCIS TOYE. Heinemann. 21s.

Mr. Francis Toye, well known as a music critic, has several excellent qualifications for writing a critical biography of Verdi. The best of these qualifications is his genuine enthusiasm for the music of this composer, which was awakened, he tells us, by several performances of Verdi operas at La Scala, Milan, under Toscanini about 1925. As a result of this enthusiasm he has done his task exceedingly well, and this book is likely to remain the standard work on Verdi in English for a long time. The first half is biographical and the second half is devoted to a study, in considerable detail, of all Verdi's compositions from his first opera, *Oberto, Conte di Bonifacio*, to his last work, the famous *Quattro Pezzi Sacri*, for choir and orchestra, which are to be performed in London on November 30th and December 1st next at a Courtauld-Sargent concert at the Queen's Hall, for the first time for many years.

Verdi's life covers most of the nineteenth century. Born in the same year as Wagner, 1813, he survived his great operatic rival, who died in 1883, by nearly a quarter of a century, dying at the age of eighty-eight in 1901. In some respects Verdi's life is as inspiring to other artists as that of any great man who has ever lived. Born in extreme poverty at Le Roncole, a hamlet—his father kept one of those small Italian inns which to English eyes resemble nothing more than a cowshed—Verdi used to walk to school at Busseto, three miles away, in the province of Parma. When he was eight years old a neighbouring workman repaired for him a broken-down spinet which his father managed to procure. Verdi kept this spinet all his life, and it can be seen to-day in the museum at Milan with the following inscription:

> By me, Stefano Cavaletti, those key-hammers were renewed and lined with leather, and I fitted pedals which I gave as a present; as I also repaired gratuitously the said key-hammers, seeing the excellent disposition the young Giuseppe Verdi shows to learn how to play this instrument—which suffices to give me complete satisfaction—anno domini 1821.

The spirit of that obscure workman, Stefano Cavaletti, was the spirit of Verdi who, as Mr. Toye rightly remarks, kept the finest traits of the North Italian peasant—his beautiful physique, his austerity, his integrity and simplicity—to the end of his days. "My youth was hard," said Verdi, in his later life, and not only was it poverty-stricken, but when just on the verge of success he had to suffer one of the worst blows fate has ever prepared for a man. Before this, however, he suffered a more ordinary reverse.

Just before his nineteenth birthday (in June, 1832) Verdi, through the assistance of his greatest benefactor, Barezzi, a grocer at Busseto, came to Milan. The money came from an institution called the *Monte di Pietà e d'Abbondanza*, founded in the seventeenth century to relieve poverty and provide grants for poor children "desirous of adopting a liberal career." The administrators produced 600 francs for two years and Barezzi provided the rest, but the Milan Conservatoire refused to admit him. He was over age and the authorities were not prepared to waive the rule for him. Mr. Toye remarks:

> Some say that Verdi did not play the pieces well enough. Fétis, the famous theorist, asserts that Basily, who attached great importance to personal impressions, was not encouraged by the student's appearance. The long and the short of the matter is that

these worthy gentlemen made a mistake, a bad mistake, but not inexcusable. Verdi's Busseto compositions were probably more remarkable for their mere existence than their actual merits . . .

Verdi, however, was recommended to a teacher, Lavigna, who turned out to be a most fortunate choice, being a composer and a first-class musician. In due course Verdi got various jobs and married Barezzi's daughter Margherita on May 4th, 1836. By good fortune he got his first opera, *Oberto*, accepted by an impresario named Merelli and produced at Milan on November 17th, 1839. "It was not a failure," says Mr. Toye, and "it certainly was not a triumph. We should call it nowadays a *succès d'estime*."

However in those days of small-scale enterprise an impresario could afford to take risks and to commission and produce works which did not need to bring in thousands of pounds immediately in order to survive as they do in these times. Accordingly he commissioned another opera from Verdi known as *Un Giorno di Regno*. It was produced at La Scala on September 5th, 1840, and was a complete failure. In the meantime the great tragic event of Verdi's life had happened. Early in 1840 he fell ill. At the beginning of April, 1840, his little boy died. Two days later his other child, a girl, died, and shortly afterwards his wife. Within three months, and at the age of twenty-seven, Verdi lost his wife and his children. Verdi was never a man who talked much, and neither Mr. Toye nor, to my knowledge, anyone else has observed the effect of this tragic experience on Verdi's life and his work. But, writing to a friend in 1876 when he was sixty-three and his finest works yet to come, he said:

> About myself in particular I have little to tell you, even less than little. I do nothing and I know nothing about anything. I wander about the fields until I am tired out; then I eat and sleep. That is all. What a fine life, you will say! True, there is little poetry in it, but, after all, it is a life like any other; and perhaps there are worse.

We must not imagine that Verdi was an unhappy man. He was of an unusually serene temperament, and enjoyed in later life magnificent health; but there was in him a profound sense of the tragic mystery of life that is exceeding rare to the degree he possessed it.

The peculiar tone of Verdi's mind is unmistakable. Writing to the Countess Maffei, his most intimate friend, in 1884 on his seventy-first birthday, he says:

> Gradually I am beginning to find my years excessive and life a sadly foolish, still worse a useless affair. What do we do? What should we do? Everything considered, there is only one humiliating, intensely sad answer: Nothing.

And when he wrote those words his two greatest works, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, were still unborn! His nearest friend and second wife, Giuseppa Strepponi, with whom he began to live about 1852 and obstinately refused to marry in spite of all the arguments and protests of his friends until 1859, was an orthodox Catholic. Verdi built her a chapel for her private use at his house at Sant' Agata, but she could not understand how a man of such sterling character as her husband could refuse to share her simple beliefs. Verdi is generally described as a man of genius, but simple and not intellectual. This will not do at all. Genius, real genius, is a strange thing. Composing Verdi's operas was not a simple matter. "Oh, God," his wife once wrote to a friend, "Oh, God, grant that Verdi shall compose no more operas!" Many intellectuals and super-intellectuals have written about Shakespeare's Iago. This is what Verdi wrote in 1881 before composing *Otello*:

> If I were an actor and had to act Iago, I should like to portray rather a spare, tall man with thin lips, small eyes set close together like a monkey's, a high, receding forehead, and head well developed at the back. His manner should be vague, nonchalant, indifferent to everything, sceptical, pungent. He should throw off good and evil sentiments lightly, as if he were thinking of something quite different from his actual utterances. Thus, if somebody reproached him, saying: "What you propose is infamous," he would reply: "Really? . . . I did not think it was . . . don't let us talk about it any more!" A man like this might deceive anybody, even his own wife to a certain extent. A small malevolent-looking man arouses suspicion in everybody and deceives no one.

Has Goethe or Coleridge or Lamb written anything better than that about Iago? And those who think Verdi knew nothing about religious experience should wait until they hear his sublime *Quattro Pezzi Sacri* (Four Sacred Pieces), composed in 1898 when he was eighty-five years old and a stubborn old man who still asserted that he knew nothing and believed nothing.

Mr. Toye describes simply and straightforwardly the astonishing career of this great musician, who developed so remarkably throughout his long life. His analysis of the operas is concise and informative, and his book is an honest monument to one of the great musicians of the world, which ought to make Verdi's real importance as a composer better known to the English public.

W. J. TURNER.

A HANDBOOK FOR PEACEMAKERS

The History of Peace. By A. C. F. BEALES. Bell. 16s.

Throughout mediæval and modern history there has been a definite tendency towards the expansion and amalgamation of the units to which human beings have given their allegiance. Men fought in succession for their city, their principality, their petty state, their country. A gradual widening of the economic life preceded and prepared this growth. This dual development might have led, eventually, to the universal harmony of mankind. But while economic interdependence now covers the whole world, the fusion of the groups which can impose their peace upon the individuals they encompass has come to a dead stop. The conception of nationality has given birth to a state identified with its inhabitants, who consider themselves definitely and immutably distinct from all other national groups, and free from all obligations towards them.

To the sovereignty of the national state is due the tragic inability of mankind to settle down to the peaceful pursuit of prosperity, culture and happiness. Those who do not expect the salvation of mankind from a revolutionary upheaval are yet compelled to admit that nothing can be hoped from natural evolution. If there be a way out, it must be devised by the conscious application of the human mind to the problem of world peace and to its ability to secure the general acceptance of some aprioristic scheme.

This is where, conceivably, the peace movement may play its part. But no solution can be envisaged, no scheme supported, without an adequate knowledge of the circumstances that have given it birth. In *The History of Peace* Mr. Beales has endeavoured —and not unsuccessfully—to provide this historical background required by the peacemakers of our day. There is room for such a work, as the only history of the peace movement already in existence is Fried's *Handbuch der Friedensbewegung*, the second edition of which appeared in 1911.

Apart from a rapid sketch of the great peace schemes of earlier periods, Mr. Beales's book is exclusively devoted to the years since 1815. We are shown how the peace movement after 1815 was purely humanitarian and how, during the first years, all the difficulties that are bound to beset the activities of the peace propagandist were already apparent. Should he be an internationalist or a non-resister, should he emphasise organisation, like the American pioneers, or principle, like the English? From

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1867 to 1889 the movement was mainly economic, and secured governmental action in the direction of arbitration. From 1889 to 1914 came the third phase of the agitation, when the basis of pacifism was broadened out by popular propaganda, while governments began to explore the theory of peace.

The chapter on the World War is the most interesting. If more than once the reader is left with the impression that world events are unaffected by theories, there are occasions when a real and vivifying contact becomes perceptible. The International League of Women for Peace and Liberty, launched in April, 1915, worked out a peace programme which President Wilson declared to be "the best proposals formulated by any association." There is between this programme and Wilson's fourteen points a connection which cannot be altogether fortuitous. The impression that remains from the epilogue dealing with the years after the World War is that the League of Nations, which at any rate provides a framework for the comity of nations of the distant future, is entirely the fruit of pacifist propaganda. Ideology, then, is not utterly sterile; it may yet liberate men from the seemingly inexorable grip of the sovereign national State. All those who look forward to this blessed liberation will find in Mr. Beales's work a useful guide and text-book.

A LAUGH OR TWO

Welcome To All This. By D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS. Methuen. 5s.

The Owl in the Attic. By JAMES THURBER. Harpers. 7s. 6d.

Honoured Sir From Babujee. Allan. 3s. 6d.

The Travel Tales of Mr. Joseph Jorkens. By LORD DUNSANY. Putnam. 7s. 6d.

Perversities of the English language that result in perversions; mere high-spirited silliness; grave untruths told without any ascertainable motive; tall stories of travel—if any of these amuse, the reader will find plenty of entertainment in these four volumes. Mr. Wyndham Lewis is easily the best of our light entertainers; his serious work, just as his rival's, Mr. Morton's, is inclined to ape Mr. Belloc, but in his humour Mr. Lewis is deliriously and deliciously himself, far sillier, far more mirth-provoking than any other living humorist. Of course if you don't like the jovial ass, the grave assumption of cap and bells, Mr. Lewis is not for you; but if you do enjoy all these things, there is plenty in this book. The mock reviews are among the most successful things. Here is a gem from a review on two books, *My Emotional Life*, by Humfray Gosh and *Flexible Bitumen Roofing*, by Ridgworth G. Tiley, F.R.I.B.A.:

> And now we have just time to glance quickly at Mr. A. Tiley's book on flexible bitumen roofing: a vigorous piece of work, hard-hitting, brilliant, but clean. "The old prejudice against this roofing," says the author with scorn, "is as dead as the Dodo." And the fireworks begin:
>
> "Time is money, and speed means economy, and length of service means roofing-efficiency. How can you ensure roofing-efficiency without a roofing-medium eliminating waste and wear? Roofing which does neither is not economical roofing. 98 per cent. of roofing trouble comes from using for roofing roofing-mediums which do not give roofing-efficiency!"
>
> All decent Englishmen will agree. But just answer me this, Mr. Tiley—what about the case where it might involve the honour of a dear, true woman?

More malicious and more critical are the up-to-date parodies of *The Fairchild Family*, in which Little Henry plays a pleasant role.

Mr. Thurber's silliness is graver and slower than Mr. Lewis's, but equally extravagant. He must be tired of hearing that he is one of the few Americans now writing who is in the old American tradition; there are pages of nonsense here that would not disgrace the best volume of selections from Mark Twain. Most comforting as is the whole of this book, perhaps the gayest section is the pet department in which the author answers questions about different animals whose portraits are given. Equally salutary are the graphically human examples of grammatical points, based on Fowler's *English Usage*. Consideration of grammar leads us naturally to the volume of Babu and pidgin English letters and notices. Perhaps the best is the simple Eastern slogan

> Hand your luggage to us. We will send it in all directions.

Though we like the end of the letter from the dejobbed Indian:

> I hope . . . good Angel will meet and pulverise your heart of nether Milestone, so that you will awaken and with as much alacrity as may be compatible with your personal safety you will hasten to rejobulate your servant. So mote it be, Amen.

And this doctor's report has a certain dignified simplicity: "11 a.m. Patient in low degree. 11.30 a.m. Patient in the sink. 12.0 n. Patient on the flit. 12.5 p.m. Patient flut." Lord Dunsany has a beautiful talent for invention; and he has used it here to produce a book that should rival Baron Munchausen. Mr. Jorkens tells his tales in a London club, and is assisted in his narrative by judicious offers of whiskey. He tells, as we should expect from an invention of Lord Dunsany's, a horrid story as well as a funny one; and he is superbly successful in the mixed variety, as of the American business man who goes to Thibet for his prayers, and comes back with a machine. This is a book of exceptional ease and power, with something of the charm of the detailed landscapes in a medieval painting.

SHAKESPEAREANA

The State of Shakespeare Study. J. M. ROBERTSON. Routledge. 6s.

Shakespeare, Chapman and Sir Thomas More. A. ACHESON. Quaritch. 10s. 6d.

The authenticity of the Shakespeare Canon, to those who are not intoxicated by faith in their own shade of dissent from it, is a depressing question; both because it is a nuisance that it can obviously never be settled (doubt, even on an irrelevant matter, tends to distract attention and paralyse judgment) and because the spectacle of experts exercising heroic faith about it must therefore give one a feeling of waste. That feeling is not altogether justified; Mr. Robertson is very well worth reading even if you are sure, or sure you cannot be sure, that he is wrong. What Sir Edmund Chambers has described as crashing about the undergrowth, whimpering here at a scent of Green, there of Peel, does in fact make good reading, because it heightens a reader's sense both of the style of the passage in question and of the variety of styles the author could draw upon. Nor is it a mistaken instinct that makes critics boisterously certain in proportion to the darkness of their subject-matter; Mr. Robertson's determination to convince gives a rousing logical energy to his writing. (Whereas Mr. Acheson, being less interested in the opposition, tends to go on weaving one of his beliefs into another, with only occasional references to his previous books in which he has "proved" them.) But, in both works, those who only want a run after the hounds have viewed may as well take out their sandwiches.

Both consider most of the Folio plays as revisions by Shakespeare of earlier work, and both give great importance to Chapman, as a part-writer of those earlier plays much of whose work now passes for Shakespeare's in the Canon. But while Mr. Robertson thinks that Chapman was ready to do donkey work, after the turn of the century, for Shakespeare to revise, Mr. Acheson thinks that they were deadly enemies from 1590 onwards, and that the substratum of Chapman in the Canon was all written before then. This form of the belief in revision seems more likely; it claims, by considering the history of the dramatic companies (a subject of portentous obscurity), to avoid making authors collaborate when in fact they were business rivals, or revise plays their companies did not own.

One result of this aim, and of Mr. Acheson's belief in the quarrel, which he proves by interpreting quite indefinite allusions, is that he regards *The Lover's Complaint* and the Chapman-like passages in *Troilus*, passages that Mr. Robertson thinks "could only" be by Chapman, as imitations written in rivalry of Chapman by Shakespeare himself. It is curious to find so whole-hearted a disintegrator admitting that Shakespeare could write how he chose; it gives away the main argument for disintegrating.

It is embarrassing that Mr. Robertson can make so plausible a claim that his methods are the "scientific" ones; use of the word in this way is making an unreal and very unfortunate distinction between "scientific" and normal modes of judgment. Here it should mean not only that certain kinds of internal evidence have been systematised with proper care, but that all kinds of evidence have been given due weight; a thing that no critic can claim to have done with the degree of certainty you expect of a physicist, because there may always be "more in" the line than he has seen.

That plays were continually revised, and that plays by accepted authors were given to new authors, like the young Shakespeare, for revision, has of course been questioned, but one must remember that the Elizabethan public wanted novelty as much as the cinema public; the players at first refused to act

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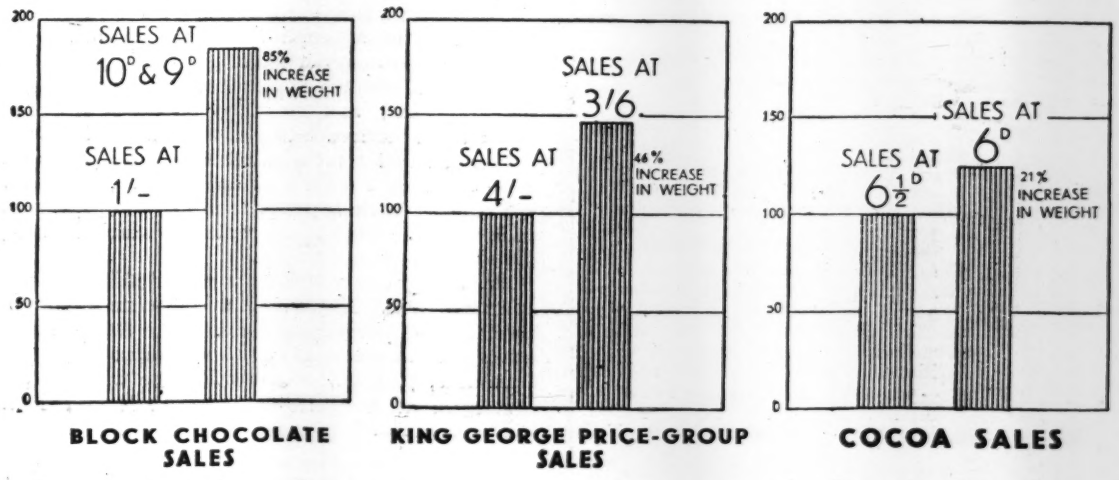

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Richard II, then four years old, for Essex, because nobody would come to anything so old-fashioned. The impression of feverish confusion given by Mr. Acheson's account is not incredible if you suppose a small public demanding continual new plays in the latest fashion, and yet rather preferring them to tell an old story.

BY-WAYS AT SEA

Seventy Fathoms Deep. By DAVID SCOTT. Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.

Whaling in the Antarctic. By A. G. BENNETT. Blackwood. 7s. 6d.

There is perhaps nothing more characteristic of the sea than its infinite variety—not merely a variety of colour and of form, but a variety of human life and adventure. When we have described the career of some distinguished smuggler or pirate or naval commander, some great explorer or navigator, we are too apt to think that we have covered the whole range of human activities at sea. Nothing could be further from the truth, of course, and Mr. David Scott's very notable book, which may fairly be described as a classic of deep-sea diving, comes as a useful reminder that there is a whole new world of romantic adventure opening out even in the old humdrum business of salvage.

Everyone knows in its bare outlines the tragic story of the *Artiglio*—how these magnificent Italian divers persisted month after month, and year after year, in their search for the sunken P. & O. liner *Egypt*, at a depth at which it seemed preposterous to suppose that any human being could work; how, after innumerable disappointments, partly due to their own over-confidence, and partly to the false scents set up by diviners and other cranks, they eventually found the mighty wreck, blew off the roof of the bullion room, and were only prevented by the approach of winter weather from completing their victory there and then; and how, to fill up time till the summer came round, they turned their attention to the sunken ammunition ship, the *Florence*, and were nearly all of them drowned in a disastrous explosion, which was nobody's fault but their own—the result of foolhardy courage—but left the whole world the poorer for their loss. It is an appropriate coincidence that Mr. Scott's narrative of this fine human effort should appear at the very moment when the second *Artiglio*, chartered by the same company, and manned, among others, by the survivors of the disaster, should be setting out from Brest to continue, in the deep Atlantic, the work which Gianni, Francheschi, Bargellini, and the rest so well began. Every man and boy of whatever nationality who read Mr. Scott's messages from the *Artiglio* as they appeared in the *Times* a year ago, and more especially everyone who reads this vigorous and inspiring book of his, will wish them God-speed.

Mr. Scott describes in loving detail the new apparatus employed by these deep-sea adventurers. It is impossible to use rubber diving suits at seventy, or even forty fathoms deep: the diver is doubled up in agony for hours after reaching the surface. Steel shells were therefore used by the Italians: some of them had jointed leg and arm pieces, enabling the diver to make some slight use of his limbs, but offering a weak point at each joint to the ruthless pressure of the sea; others—and these were preferred—were mere oblong boxes with windows, every movement of which was carried out by the winch on the ship's deck on telephoned instructions from the diver. In this deep-sea diving there is no question of wriggling through doorways armed with a pick and shovel; the only method of getting at the cargo is to lower a charge of explosives and blow off the deck.

But the charm of the book lies deeper than this. Mr. Scott has sketched in the characters of each one of these bull-necked Italians—they were most of them men of splendid physique—with a skill that can hardly be over-praised. Gianni, the chief diver, the boyish, jovial, over-confident genius who led them to victory and at last to death, lives in the memory like a character in Dickens. Francheschi and Bargellini and Commendatore Quagglia (who is still alive, but will surely forgive Mr. Scott for this merciless but delightful portrait), all these are drawn with the same sure, affectionate touch. Mr. Scott loves adjectives, but there was never a book which contained less flummery. His account of the final tragedy may be commended as a model of restrained emotional effect.

It was no small achievement in a foreigner and a landlubber, as Mr. Scott was, to settle down among these people and become one of them. That is the secret of the success of his book. He has himself become part of the picture, every sentence of the book was obviously written on board; and we find ourselves sharing the adventure with him and listening eagerly, as though to a telephone talk from the *Artiglio's* deck. We have here, in fact, an example of the very best kind of journalism, which nowadays deserves all the encouragement it can get.

The modern industry of whaling is not quite such an obscure activity of the sea as Mr. A. G. Bennett seems to suppose. His statement that "no book has dealt with it" should be qualified by the reservation that while we may have lacked a comprehensive work, many vivid and authoritative chapters on whaling have appeared in recent biographies and memoirs. Almost everyone must by this time be aware of the changes which have taken place in the hunting of whales, especially in the invention of the cruel harpoon-gun, which discharges from the deck of the pursuing steamer a missile which explodes after entering the whale's body. And most people are aware of the inevitable result—a rapid and alarming decline in the whale population. For many years past it has been a waste of time to look for whales in the Northern seas; and the story which Mr. Bennett has to tell is of the recent concentration of the hunters in the Antarctic seas, "their last and greatest sanctuary." At present, he says, there is no alarming evidence of exhaustion of whales in the South. We may therefore hope for the best, and, in the meantime, keep an optimistic eye on the experiments which are being made in the use of whale-oil substitutes.

Mr. Bennett has written a remarkably interesting and well-informed book. He foresees a day when parties of tourists will be conducted across the Great White South, and scarlet pillar-boxes will, at intervals, break the monotony of the snow. By that time, perhaps, events will have taken a turn which will enable us, without inconvenience, to leave the remnant of the whales in peace.

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can bear no more. Dr. Elwenspoek gives the whole story of Süss's life, together with many illustrations and facsimiles of contemporary documents, and it is impossible not to feel the tragic fate of Süss's father hanging over his son's head. For Georg Eberhard von Heidersdorf, whose casual intercourse with a Jewess resulted in Süss Oppenheimer, was sentenced, unjustly, to death for cowardice; was then reprieved, but so ignominiously that he exclaimed "I did not ask for such pardon as this," and was paraded in a gallows cart before the whole Imperial army. His very gifted son was already rich in 1734, having business connections in Mannheim and Heidelberg, and he rendered considerable services to the landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, as private banker. He entered, in 1735, the service of Carl Alexander of Würtemberg "one of the most brilliant generals of his century, beloved of high and low alike by virtue of his kind heart, his affability, and his bluff, brisk manner." Him Süss served faithfully and strenuously, providing him with the money he needed, by coining, extorting, and borrowing it, by bribery and blackmail and taxation. Twice, when the maddened populace thought they had got him, thought that he was fallen, Süss threw himself upon his master's mercy and triumphed—the most elaborate investigations ended only in the Jew's complete vindication. When Carl Alexander died it was thought expedient that one man should die—the much-hated Süss. The account of his trial and death is horrible; an earlier Dreyfus, he had no Zola, no France to defend him; and he who had lived a rake died a martyr.

Mate in Two Moves. By BRIAN HARLEY. Bell. 5s.

Chess-players will be grateful for this little book, though they will not agree with Mr. Brian Harley that the chess-problem is superior to the full game. The problem is a quick, brilliant tableau, while the other is the play itself. One of the chess-problemist's rules is to make his positions *possible*, but they are not always probable, and for this reason many chess-players distrust them. No one, however, will deny the brilliant fancy of many of the problems collected in this book. As chess editor of the *Observer*, Mr. Harley has published during the last few years some of the most ingenious problems ever composed: in particular those by C. Mansfield, A. C. White, B. J. de C. Andrade and the editor. He analyses 170 two-move problems, gives a brief history of chess-problems, and describes in detail his own methods of composing and solving problems.

Economic Fragments. By DENIS ROBERTSON. King. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Denis Robertson is as good a writer as he is an economist—which puts him at the top of both professions. But he leaves other people to work out most of his ideas, and only rarely indulges reluctantly in the luxury of an article or review. Perhaps he holds the unusual theory that unless one is quite sure of having something worth while to say it is better to keep silent. However, he has been persuaded to put his occasional articles into a volume, and promises us another comprised of his articles on monetary theory. In this book there are several solid and some popular discussions of economic theory: three objective but not very remarkable records of current events—the coal strike of 1912, the General Strike and the shipping slump—from an economist's point of view: these are three youthful papers written for undergraduate societies before the War, discussing the use of force, instinct and reason, and the sort of world God might have made if we had not made a mess of this one. In addition there are fifteen reviews of books. Witty and sincere, erudite and simple, individual and objective, they combine all the least easily assembled merits of a reviewer.

Mary Webb: a Short Study of her Life and Work. By HILDA ADDISON. Palmer. 5s.

It is good to have this plain biographical sketch of Mary Webb's life; the author takes up no cudgels for neglected genius. Nor is there need, for clearly she was heading towards recognition in her lifetime, and it was not merely her premature death that jarred a callous world into attention. Mrs. Addison's study makes no claim to exhaustiveness either as criticism or as narrative, but here are the facts of her life bearing out what is obvious in her works, that the Shropshire landscape she loved so much is not only their background but their foreground. Deprived of this incentive, it is doubtful whether she would have written at all. In addition, her deep religious sense brought a mingling of almost Biblical phraseology with the Shropshire dialect in *Precious Bane*. Mrs. Addison stresses Mary Webb's naïve generosity which led to charitable gifts when she could least afford them, often to the undeserving. Mary Webb, like many an artist, was lacking in sophisticated worldly judgment; yet that she could be severely practical is proved by the episode of her market-gardening at Pontesbury. The simplicity and straightforward outlook of country dwellers was blended with her own more penetrating vision.

Peninsular Europe: Some Geographical Peregrinations Ancient and Modern. By L. W. LYDE. Longmans. 10s. 6d.

Professor Lyde is tempted to overstress, if that be possible, the effects of physical environment on the social and political development of peoples. As a corrective, however, to the theories that will have "race" to be the supreme factor, geographical history is always to be welcomed. Professor Lyde uses "peninsular" in a very broad sense, making the term include France, but his reasons for doing so are certainly cogent. Reviewing European history, he makes us see it as the history of peninsular peoples. Greece, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia and France support his argument; and when Germany threatens to be a stumbling block, he makes short work of Germany. But was it Germany's continental position, inviting the confusion of races and tongues to which the Professor refers, that kept her from attaining the national and cultural status acquired by France? Was it not rather the particularism of the great Duchies which thwarted the national policy of the Ottos? And this particularism, though it was steadily accentuated by the conquest of the old German lands east of the Elbe, was it not of tribal rather than geographical origin? Anyway, Professor Lyde has given us as exciting and provocative a study of European history as anyone could desire.

The Surrender of an Empire. By NESTA WEBSTER. Boswell Publishing Co. 15s.

One knows what to expect from Mrs. Webster: great learning, diligence, and passionate zeal in the presentation of her case. Rarely indeed can we detect an error of fact. But facts are Delphic oracles: every one has several possible interpretations; and they admit, like the Sibylline leaves, of being selected and combined at will. Mrs. Webster selects, combines, and interprets her facts to prove a foregone conclusion. In her view everything that has been done by British statesmen during the last thirty years has been a weak and cowardly renunciation of duty, a "surrender" of an Imperial outpost. A score of illustrations of this mental tendency might easily be given. It leads her to see a Bolshevik conspiracy in nearly every untoward incident from Winnipeg to Wellington; to call attempts to promote friendliness in Europe "the sabotage of the Peace"; to idolise Lord Lloyd and General Dyer; and—what is perhaps more exasperating than anything else—to employ the word "patriot" throughout as a synonym for "one who agrees with Mrs. Webster."

Crossroads of the Java Sea. By HENDRIK DE LEEUW. Cape. 15s.

As a vivid impressionist study of the Dutch East Indies, and their peoples, Mr. de Leeuw's record of his years of travel in the islands is welcome. His apparent claim, however, that his ethnological investigations have scientific value is not so acceptable. There is much that is true in his records but that much is not new; indeed, original research needs a method of investigation for which he seems to have little aptitude. Here and there, no doubt, his observations on the customs, particularly the sexual customs, of the pagan tribes, invite further investigation, but as a rule they are either perfunctory or cover ground already well investigated. No one would gather, for instance, from his notes on the Sea Dyaks and other tribes of Borneo that, with the exception of Dr. Malinowski's studies of the Trobrianders, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, by Hose and McDougall is probably the most comprehensive account of primitive culture that has been given us. He mentions the book, it is true, but does not appear to recognise

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its value. When it comes, however, to visual descriptions, Mr. de Leeuw is in his element; and his word pictures are often those of an artist. The book is well illustrated with photographs, and with decorations by Mr. Alexander King.

About Motoring

A SELF-CHANGING GEAR ON THE ROAD

I HAVE just completed 2,000 miles in very difficult country with a heavy car equipped with one of the modern self-changing gears (actually a Wilson gear on a 15-h.p. Armstrong-Siddeley car). This experience bears out all that I had previously written about such gears from a comparatively limited test. The hub of the steering wheel is some 5 in. in diameter, and bears the usual horn-push at its centre. A lever about as thick as a pencil protrudes some 2½ in. from the right-hand side of the hub, and six words are radially engraved on the polished black hub, viz., "Reverse," "Neutral," "Low," "Medium," "Normal," and "High." The engine is started with the lever at "Neutral." The lever is then moved to "Low," but nothing happens until the clutch pedal is depressed, as the actual gear-changing only occurs when the pedal is operated, and the lever has no function except to select a gear in advance. As the car moves off on the low gear, the selecting lever is moved to "Medium," and this second gear is automatically engaged when the clutch pedal is next depressed and released again. Thus in a very few seconds the car is moving fast on its highest gear, without the least possibility of shock or jar to the passengers, and without the faintest symptom of any mechanical noise. If the law permitted, a child of ten could handle the car perfectly from the gear-changing point of view. It is still possible for a fool to jerk the car. For example, if the car were moving at forty miles an hour on top gear, and a duffer moved the lever to "Low," and dabbed the clutch in and out, bottom gear would promptly come into action noiselessly; but the violent change from a ratio of 5 down to a ratio of 22 would jar the car rather abominably. A little clumsiness in less outrageous changes is, however, imperceptible. If a driver engaged third gear when the car was tearing along on top at fifty miles an hour, there would be a slight noiseless shock, but the passengers would merely accuse their cicerone of a little clumsiness. A clever driver can do all sorts of tricks with the gear in delightful fashion. For instance, if the car is rushing up to a point-policeman at speed, and he gives the stop signal, the driver can preselect second gear, and apply his brakes. The policeman's arm falls, and the driver taps his clutch. The car gathers way again perfectly smoothly on second gear. Or to consider a real emergency, supposing the driver became conscious of a serious brake failure whilst descending Porlock Hill on top gear. He could preselect the three lower gears in turn, shut his throttle on each, and eventually, without the use of any brakes at all, bring the car down to a crawl on the fierce gradient. If the steep gradient prevented the car from stopping on bottom gear with the throttle shut, and a flock of sheep blocked the road, he could further proceed to engage the reverse gear, and force the car to reascend the hill backwards.

There cannot be any perceptible waste of power in the gearbox; the body of the 15-h.p. Armstrong-Siddeley is extremely capacious, yet the car will do 65 m.p.h. on top, and register a perfectly normal fuel consumption in proportion to any selected speed of travel. All the gears are quiet, the lower ratios being much more silent than the average. When climbing a hill in company with another car, many yards are gained at each gear-change. The standard car with a sliding gear checks very perceptibly by comparison during gear-changes as the driver double-clutches. This is why a number of leading racing men have tried to persuade their factories to adopt this gear. Its use would indeed be a great asset to the winning of road races, but manufacturers do not care to win races with a specification obviously and fundamentally different from their standard job. But the speed and ease of gear-changing do lighten the driver's task in touring work. I soon became so used to the selector lever that I did not normally operate it until a change became imminent. But on heavy traffic or on a long hill it is no bad plan to preselect the gear next below that on which the car is actually moving, and to tap the clutch when a change suddenly becomes desirable, either to accelerate through a traffic gap or to face a rise of gradient round a corner. The value of the gear is especially evident in the maze of lanes which furnish such pleasant exploration on the foothills of Dartmoor and Exmoor. Here it is seldom possible to see more than a few yards ahead, and the craziest corners or fiercest gradients may greet one at any turning. The driver must use his eyes like a hawk, since cattle or carts or cyclists may loom up at an instant's warning; and both safety and convenience are well served by the facility with which a forked lightning gearchange can be made so soundlessly.

In particular this gear may be recommended to the elderly novice, or to the fundamentally clumsy person. The standard sliding gearbox presents no really acute difficulties to a youngish driver, who is mildly technical and possesses an adaptable mind. But the standard change is not absolutely easy. It varies with the speed of the car and the speed of the engine, and even with the temperature of the lubricant in the gearbox. So it completely baffles a small percentage of owners. I have known elderly novices abandon it in despair; and a few years ago I could find no expedient for such persons except the Trojan car, which has a foolproof epicyclic gear, but was not necessarily everybody's choice on general grounds. But no elderly novice need have the slightest qualm in buying a preselector gear. Its appeal is equally vivid to the sort of man or woman whose approach to motoring is purely utilitarian. If an owner takes the same pride in good driving as he takes in playing a sonata or hitting a golfball 200 yards, by all means let him cling to the sliding gear. But if he regards his car as he regards his boots, simply as an aid to locomotion, let him end his gear-changing obsession by buying a gearbox of this type.

I have failed to detect any defect whatsoever in the gear except that the driver only possesses aural information of the gear which is actually in use. His lever may point to any of its six positions on the hub of the steering wheel; but the indicated gear may either be in action at the moment, or merely preselected in readiness for the next change. Memory or ear must inform him which gear is in use at any given moment. This does not really matter. It is possible to imagine that you are on third when you are really on fourth, and *vice versa*; but no harm is done by such misconceptions.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

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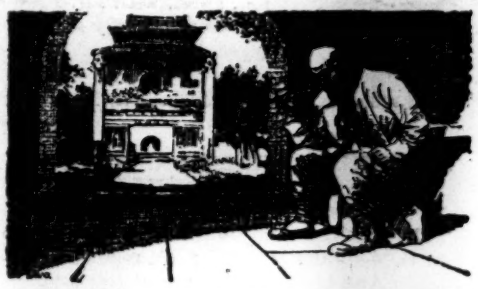

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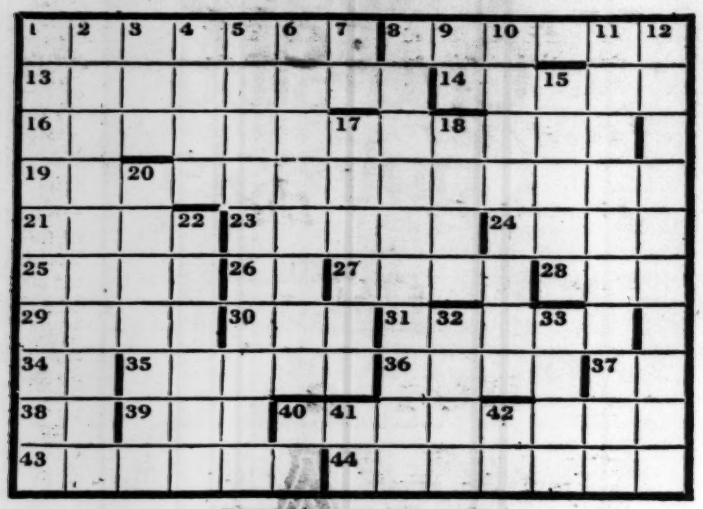


BELIEVE IT OR NOT

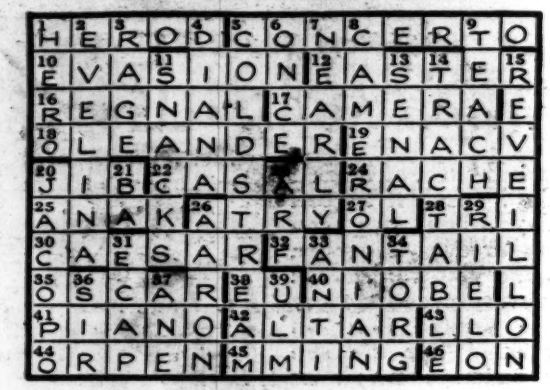
ACROSS

1. A certain Major-General's knowledge of this subject exceeded that of a novice in a nunnery.
8. Limps to begin with, and is pretty dismal anyway.
13. Might well describe the denture of any self-respecting heroine.
14. When my snows are melted, the Oxus overflows.
16. Spectacles well-suited to Napoleon during the hundred days.
19. Up-to-date form of government.
21. The " nose " have it !
23. A diffusion where is is not.
24. A famous Republican.
25. Manifestation of a roving optic.
26. With 40 Down (*rev.*), what Mr. Brummel gave himself.
27. Every one is a trifle confused.
28 *rev.* Indisposition.
29. A connection that is almost lacking in breadth.
30. We can put them up with 41.
31. Darby returns to Joan !
34. This is what you would get if you were Edison.
35. Take king and saint to the mill.
36. A bit of a deer.
37. Same as 26.
38. The best place for me to make play with.
39. The way back from Philippi.
40. Signs and tokens.
43 *rev.* Presumably not ideally.
44. Nice job for a Dutch uncle.

DOWN

1. The study of such specimens as 27.
2. Adam or Eve.
3. A dove without a hat.
4. Allowance for weight.
5. In the beginning.
6. Relating to the earthquake, and overturned by it too ; the plot of it has totally disappeared.
7. Abbreviated part of Rin-tin-tin.
8. I'm not exactly red-blooded, and one of my vowels has gone wrong.
9. Pep after 7.
10. A good day for the Race.
11. What swallows do in April.
12. Mr. Pusey ends heretically.
15. 7 is an example.
17. Sounds gloomy but is indehiscent.
18. Major with seven stars.
20. Mr. Clynes' sweepstake.
22 *rev.* Might be used to " retain " a Cockney's permanent wave.
32. Almost almost dark.
33. Cut one's corn.
40. See 26.
41. See 30.
42. Look for me in New England.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



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Caliban to Alonso : *righto carry on this week why waste money on telegraphing swear words caliban.*)

UPRIGHTS

" This ought to prove " declared the B.B.C.
" An intellectual treat for you and me."
" No " answered Father What's-his-name " it ain't :
" How can the sceptic comprehend the saint ? "

LIGHTS

1. Our hero's joined the Fascists ? Nay ; what's more,
   We met him last, I think, at Elsinore.
2. Our butler, with a sense of fitness cursed,
   Opined Utopia might be thus reversed.
3. The British this—and note, a pot can turn—
   Is now, most oddly, Rothermere's concern.
4. 'Twas no one, I suppose, in Rome would dare
   So to upset this Sibylline affair.
5. You must be nervous, if you may not face
   The kindly greetings of the market-place.
6. Severe, no doubt, yet played a gracious part—
   " I love " was written (backwards) at his heart.
7. Now, by the Lord, the outlook's pretty dank :
   Is it concealment ? Have we drawn a blank ?
8. Though nonsense, oft enough, is linked with me,
   I don't pretend to call myself K.C.
9. Another ailment, and—the joke is crude—
   There's no connection, child, with Mr. Froude.
10. He loves his work—is that a deadly sin ?
    And, though they sneer, his helpmeet's safe within.
11. I give the name by which they first were known
    Until a sovereign claimed them as her own.

SOMETHING FOR MRS. GONZALO, TOO.

I.

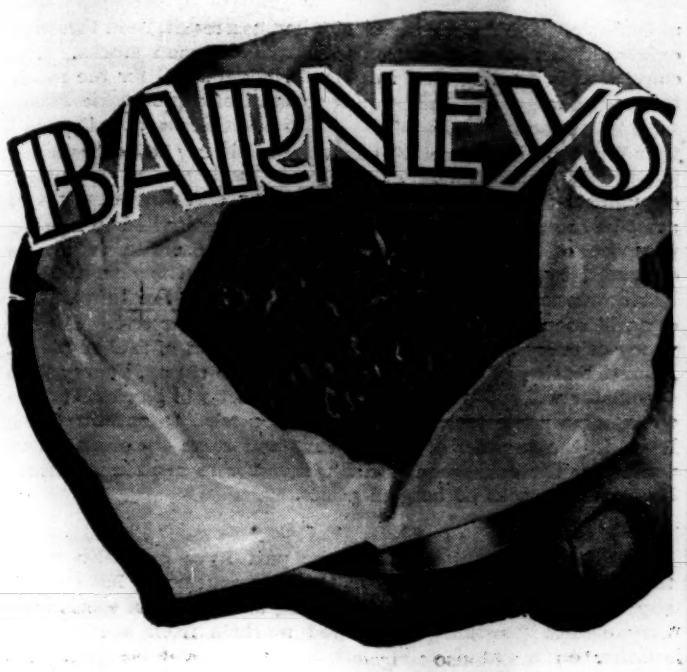
" How lucky I am," murmured Beauchamp ;
" So distant my feet I can't reauchamp,
And they shine in the night
An ineffable whight
Since I took the precaution to bleauchamp."

II.

An adventurous fellow was St. John ;
He went for a ride on an^{t}. John ;
But he fell, sad to say ;
In the permanent way.
It was not at all nice to imp^{t}. John.

III.

" Though I'm full of ideas," said Miss Cholmondeley
" The young men all stare at me dolmondeley ;
My face is unique—
They're frightened to spique ;
I could wish I were not quite so colmondeley."



"...your round airtight Tin was in beautiful condition and, in my opinion, a perfect pipe Tobacco...."

Hyde Park, W. 2

The smoker's letter from which these headlines were taken came from Queensborough Terrace, Hyde Park, W.2. In extenso it reads:

"For some time past I have been experimenting with tobaccos "to try to find a brand I really liked. I have bought 'home-"made' mixtures and most of the known brands in tins, "without real success.

"I then tried your round airtight Tin. It was in beautiful "condition and, in my opinion, is a perfect pipe tobacco. "My experiments are now ended, as I shall always smoke "your round Tin tobacco in future."

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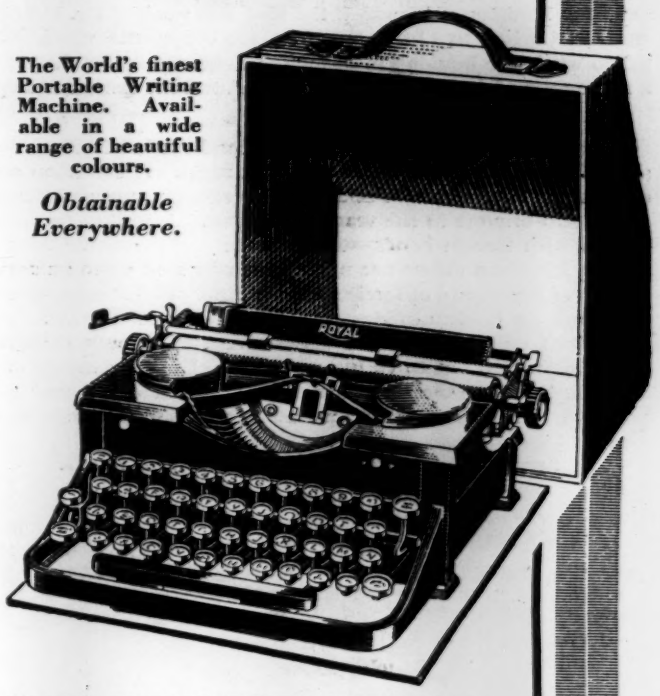

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR.

THE SLUMP IN FOREIGN BONDS—THE NEW YORK BREAK—INVESTMENT TRUSTS CONTINUED.

BY all means let us have sanity in business and the stock markets, but why, oh why, must the effusions of the "sunshine" press always lead us straight to the asylum doors? I have just read that prices "which had apparently reached bottom some months ago, have taken a turn towards a second bottom" and that in previous trade depressions this phenomenon of the "second bottom" has been followed by "revival at a very quick pace." Now there has never been a slump quite like this one, but this solemn pronouncement of our economist medicine-man was concluded with the priceless remark: "We are unconsciously on the up-grade." Perhaps this referred to the writer's imagination, but so far as the Stock Exchange is concerned we are very conscious of being on the down-grade. It is not that the City ignores the adjustments that are slowly being made in British industry in its fight for world trade—the reductions in costs, the improvements in efficiency, the rationalisation of marketing and other gradual changes which escape the notice of our candid critics, M. Siegfried and Dr. Sprague. It is merely that the City is fearful of liquidation from abroad, seeing that M. Siegfried's and Dr. Sprague's countrymen are getting in a panic about German Reparation payments in particular and about foreign Government bonds in general. The Credit Anstalt affair in Austria, the flight from the peseta, the defaulting of Peru on its external and internal debt, the rumour of a moratorium for Brazil (since denied by the Brazilian Minister of Finance), the visit this week of Dr. Brüning and Dr. Curtius to Chequers—these are the events which have led to wholesale liquidation in foreign Government bonds and to a movement of American and French funds from Central Europe.

* * *

It is not surprising that the foreign bond market in New York should have lapsed into chaos and dark night. It has often done so before. The mere talk of a single foreign Government default is liable to bring it to the verge of collapse. American banks are choked with foreign bonds—the result in part of unwise issues—for the American public has never been educated up to an appreciation of the merits of foreign investments. It has been possible this week for holders of sterling foreign bonds to "switch" into equivalent dollar issues at a great profit. The only trouble is that the profit is apt to vanish when the dollar price moves down again in the day following the transaction. Here are some comparative sterling and dollar prices ruling in the middle of the week:

Sterling Loans.	Price	Yield % to Maturity.	Dollar Loans.	Price	Yield % to Maturity.
Argentine, Port of the Capital 5%, 1949	80	7.03	Argentine 6%, 1961	74½	8.32
Australia 4¼%, 1940-60	60	8.50	Australia 4½%, 1956	49½	9.95
Brazil 6½%, 1957	44	15.12	Brazil 6½%, 1957	36	18.70
Chile 6%, 1930-62	70	9.45	Chile Mortgage Bank 6%, 1962	55½	11.05
City of Cologne 6%, 1953	83	7.62	City of Cologne 6½%, 1950	78½	8.85
New South Wales 5%, 1935-45	53	10.23	New South Wales 5%, 1958	42	12.58
Peru 7½% Guano, 1948*	70	11.75*	Peru 6%, 1961	18½	—

* It is believed that there is no immediate default on the Peru Guano loan.

I am not suggesting that the London market in foreign bonds is in a much better condition than the New York. Dealings here in Brazilian, Chilean and Peruvian loans have become a matter of negotiation.

* * *

America, it appears, has temporarily lost confidence in itself as well as in foreign countries. The cutting of the New York rediscount rate to 1½ per cent., followed by the renewing of "call" money on the Stock Exchange at 1 per cent. (for the first time since 1908), had a curious reaction on the markets. You may restore confidence, after a credit crisis, by lowering money rates quickly, but you are apt to destroy confidence altogether if eventually you make money too cheap. It is unwise to call attention in a trade slump to the fact that money is almost unlendable. The American investor has, as a result, been throwing overboard his most treasured industrial common stocks. The conviction is growing that President Hoover's call for the maintenance of wages and the pushing forward of capital expenditure schemes at the beginning of the slump was the wrong policy, and that Washington has merely encouraged industry to postpone the inevitable readjustment of its costs and prices. Bankers, economists and business leaders are now declaring that wages must be brought down and investors are being invited to face the prospect of industrial conflict, which in America is always enlivened by the use of machine-guns. Everything points to a last downward plunge of the New York Stock Exchange. The cry will soon be heard that the slump will never end. The solvency of every big firm will become the subject of foul suspicion. In anticipation of "the worst winter of the slump," every little speculator will sell "short," and the market will be carried down to extreme panic levels just as it was carried to extreme boom levels in the summer of 1929. Thus will come the great opportunity for the courageous British investor to acquire America's best equity stocks at bargain prices.

* * *

British investment trusts in the past have generally served the investor well, not because their managements have shown any exceptional wisdom in the buying and selling of securities—they cannot "switch" in limited markets from one stock to another on a grand scale—but because they have pursued a conservative financial policy. In replying last week to a correspondent I drew the customary distinction between the pre-war and the post-war investment trust companies. The pre-war have been able to build up capital reserves, partly by applying capital profits to the writing-down of investments (thus creating "hidden" reserves), partly by not distributing their income up to the hilt (thus creating "visible" reserves). But their income this year will suffer just as badly as that of the post-war companies, and it is by no means certain that they will be able to maintain their existing dividends. Here are some examples:

	Date formation.	1930 Earnings %	Divs. %	Highest Price 1930	Present Market Price	Div. Yield %
Alliance Trust (ord. stk.)	1888	37.4*	25	650	585	4.67
British Assets (5s. ord. shs.)	1898	40.4*	20	38/–	23/6	4.26
British Investment (def. stk.)	1889	27.4	21	443	383	5.48
General Investors (ord. stk.)	1907	19.1	17	322	275	6.18
Guardian (ord. stk.)	1888	15.4	11	211	180	6.11
Industrial & General (ord. stk.)	1889	21.3	18	363	297	6.06
Investment Trust (def. stk.)	1888	25.4*	20	486	390	5.13
Mercantile (ord. stk.)	1884	20.3	16½	344	280	5.89

* Calculated before increase of capital.

It will be seen that the equity stocks of all these old-established companies have suffered severe market depreciation, and that they now offer comparatively generous dividend yields, except those of the two Scottish trusts—Alliance and British Assets—whose prudent directors make it their tax-saving policy to distribute moderate cash dividends but issue stock bonuses or new stock on bonus terms. But will dividends be maintained?

* * *

The post-war investment trust companies have not had time to build up capital reserves to meet the depreciation on their investments at the present time. Here are six companies formed between 1924 and 1929:

	Date formation.	1930 Earnings %	Divs. %	Highest Price 1930	Present Price	Div. Yield %
Abbots Investment (£1 shs.)	1928	5.2	4.0	18/9	13/–	6.15
Anglo-Celtic (ord. stk.)	1925	11.7	7.5	156½	115	6.52
Grange Trust (ord. stk.)	1926	7.87	6.0	122½	85	7.06
London & Strathclyde (ord. stk.)	1928	6.5	5.0	140	80	6.25
Nineteen-twenty-nine (ord. stk.)	1929	6.3	4.0	103⅜	65	6.15
Stockholders (ord. stk.)	1924	9.7	7.0	180	93	7.52

In all cases it is important for the investor to consider carefully the capital structure and avoid those trusts with a low ratio of ordinary capital (say 10 per cent. to 20 per cent.) to the total share and loan capital employed. Obviously a 20 per cent. decline in revenue for such companies would endanger the ordinary stock dividends. It is surprising to find that investment trust ordinary stocks are still selling at about double their break-up values (where calculations can be made). The market is not therefore yet adjusted to realities.

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